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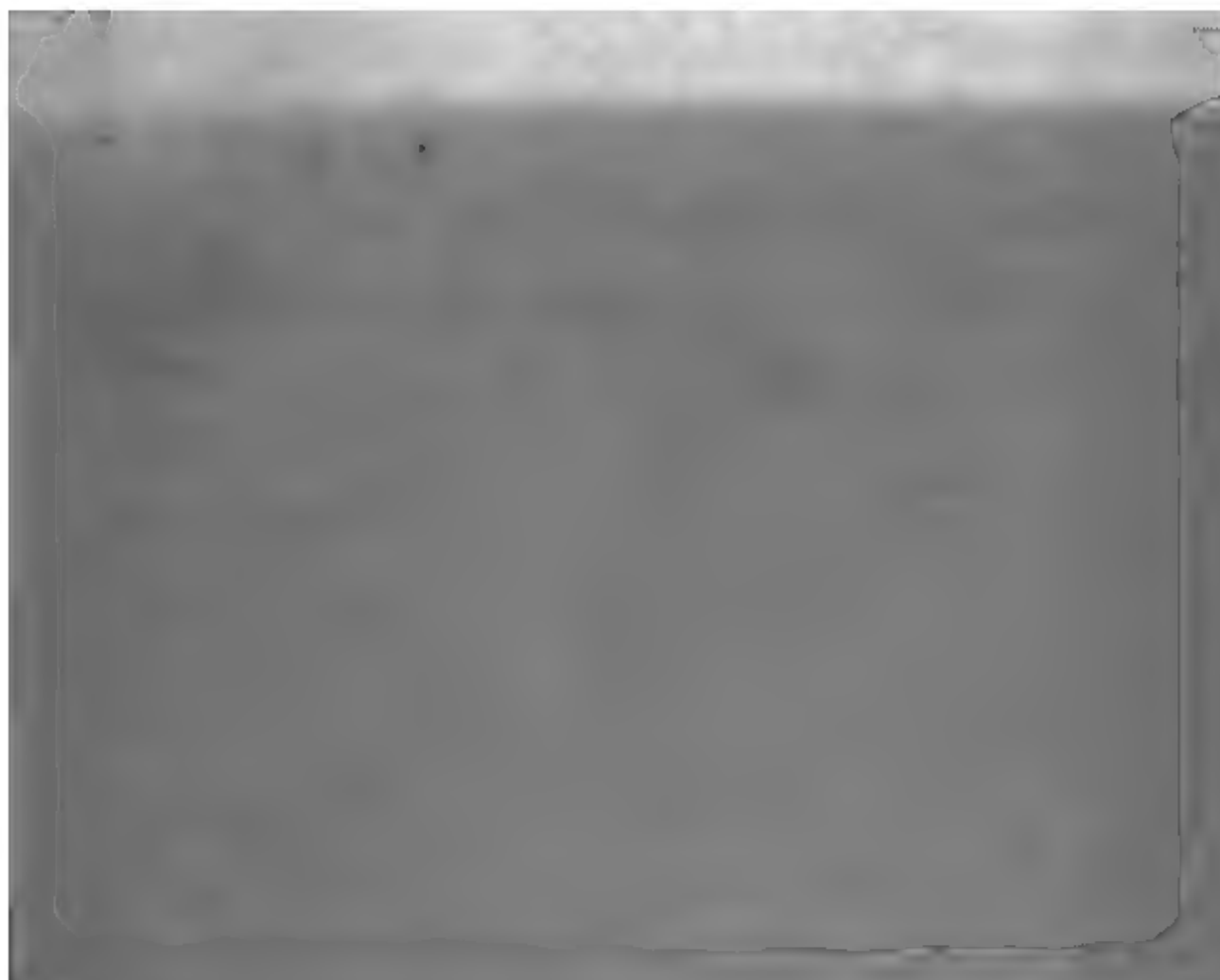
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"You'll win, Jim!"

M. LEONE BRACKET -

THE BIG FELLOW

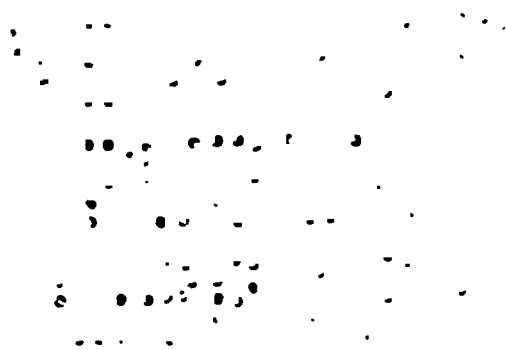
BY

FREDERICK PALMER

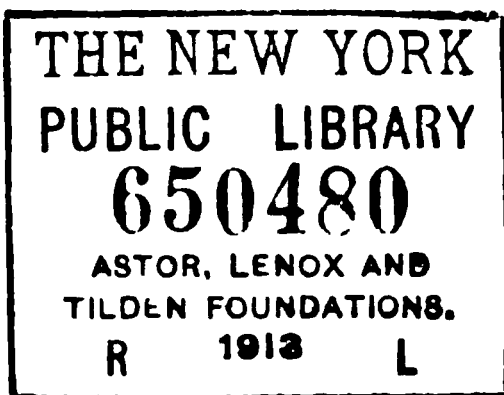
Author of "The Vagabond," "The Ways of the
Service," "With Kuroki in Manchuria," etc.

Illustrated by

M. LEONE BRACKER



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TO THE READER

Miss Destiny carry the flag wherever she claim whatever manner of servants she may scarcely exceed the wonder of her ment with the abc's on the other side of the

A new kind of gift was borne by one to another; a new thing was brought into an old world. Already those who were in hands at the outset of this enterprise see its still fresh in mind, as a page of romantic that can never be repeated.

Anyone thinks that he can name the village which the Big Fellow of my novel came the city in which he began his career, I only say that they are somewhere between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi; and one thinks that he recognizes the original; I shall only say that it is one of the elago to the east of Borneo and the south of

d such things as you describe really occur re? " demanded a reader of the manuscript. Ask this question to former Sergeant Smith, Company B, who, after he left the regulars, had dening experience as an Inspector of Con-ry.

“ In which island did they happen to you? ” was his answer.

“ Surely there wasn't such a man as General Prairie Fire? ” the reader asked.

Army friends who were familiar only with the brigade commanders under whom they served, are sure that they identify him.

“ Honest, now, which one of that lot did you draw him from? ” Smith inquired. So it was with Parkowitz, Cortina, and Don Francisco of Toll.

“ But the Big Fellow—I do know who he is! ” persisted the reader.

Decidedly you do not, good sir. You are quite astray if you associate this type, expressive of his country's characteristics in a new field, with any individual. It was out of the native mind that I christened him. Small of stature themselves and quickly impressed by externals, our brown cousins saw in us a race of giants. Again I tried Smith.

“ You've rolled a number of Governors into one,” said he.

The men who did their work well in the Islands were men well grounded in law and civil rights; men of smiling, big, generous manner and an overflowing stock of patience, who had the gift of winning the trust of a people grown suspicious through generations of oppression. Many days have I spent in their company. Often have I talked with them of their careers at home that prepared them for careers abroad, where sometimes they had to be serious in most humorous situations. Out of my appreciation of the service they

have done has risen this token of affection and esteem.

“ And did those children actually come to school naked? ” concluded the reader.

“ You bet they did! ” to use the good American language of Smith.

This brings us to the Charming Lady who taught the abc's at Bowang. She supplies what the publishers call the love theme, I believe. In her case I am ticklishly near reproducing the original, which makes me all the happier to hide the identity of my island under the name of Bar. For she was most embarrassed and so were all present, except the pupils.

Finally, one who has a story to tell of home and of Bar in those days need ask himself only if its spirit and any lesson it offers are true. His characters must be born of the people he knew or they are unreal, and yet they must avoid the detail of any single living experience or he would be a biographer.

FREDERICK PALMER.

NEW YORK, *June 2*, 1908.

THE BIG FELLOW

BOOK I

I

A ROOM IN POVERTY ROW

YOU will know him at a glance and if you gain any influence over him do try to persuade him to stop it, or he will be a disgrace to the family," Madame Mother had written to one of the professors who had been his father's classmate.

Through his seventeenth and eighteenth years, in outward calm and inward shame, he went on adding height. In his nineteenth year he did slow down; but such a prestige he had for growing that no one dared say whether six feet two inches marked a recess or a finality. When conviction drove skepticism out of his own mind, he gave what he called a Stop Party in his room in Poverty Row which his personality had made cosmopolitan. A copy of that invitation—

“ Glory Be!

It Isn't to be a Habit!

Congratulations from Four to Six,

Tuesday Afternoon! ”

is a precious relic among the few men who have family garrets in which to stow mementoes. At the same time, he wrote the news to Madame Mother and also to Ellen Moore—as if a two-braid girl would care!

By no choice of his own, James Harden was as conspicuous on the first day he walked across the campus as the one bearded freshman of thirty. Something in his pervasive geniality made it natural to call him the Big Fellow, which became a name of destiny to follow him: as much a heritage as Jim for James. The class made him president because, as Willy Sweetser said, it did not look right to put such a commanding individual anywhere except at the head of the procession. But this was only an honor—which he received in laughing surprise—while that Stop Party was really the first memorable milestone in his life. With graduation he was at his second.

The things that had made his room cheerful were partly in his trunk and mostly out of it in confusion on the floor. He paused over each article as if holding it in his hand a while softened the misery of putting it away. Everybody of '88—now to be scattered from the democracy of student lives into the autocracy of the world—had already said good-by repeatedly to him; but the ones whose trunks were on the way to the station, or at least strapped, and who had an idle hour before train time, drifted toward the quarters of the poorer students in Charlotte Square and up the worn marble steps of the old red brick house, No. 22

to the third story front. They wanted to see how the Big Fellow got on with his packing. "Slowly but thoroughly," he said, in answer to every inquiry and always in laughing good-humor. "It hurts, doesn't it?" he added, pausing. "I feel every root coming out and they're sized roots with me."

The big reading-chair, fit for a giant, the one piece of furniture which was his own, he had had to take home. Where his books had been hanging over the mantle and on a board laid across the top of an ancient-of-days desk—of the order which belonged to the landlady's family when it was under other circumstances—the removal revealed the fact that the wall paper had once been pink in color and in design as French as the Empire piano and its tapestry long since given way to horse-hair cloth on which he had been wont to sit rigidly at work.

"It's not soap and it's not catsup, I hasten to say," he continued, with a nod toward two wooden boxes which he had from the corner grocery.

"Far be it from me to put them under false names. Abraham Lincoln and his guild are in the pink box and Blackstone and the others in the cat-box"—the others being histories of law and civilization. "If you don't find it in Lincoln, who is so much handier and easier, you'll find it in Blackstone. There's one thing both are silent about—we've found—packing; while Kent's Commentaries are a little shy on how a young man is to make a living with no capital except a sheepskin."

He wiped a bead off his brow, took a paper-weight off a pile of photographs and clothes and books that would not go into the boxes, and slipped it into a boxing-glove. Then he wrapped a photograph of Aunt Julia in an enormous sweater.

“ I’ll get them in, all right,” he said. “ Now look at that! I ask if a man with an undershirt of that size isn’t entitled to some sympathy? ”

He held up a generous expanse of wool so that all might see, and rolled it into a wad which, piston-like, his muscular arm rammed between a pair of shoes and “ The Federalist ” in one volume.

“ Big, what are you going to do this summer? ” asked one of the five or six men in the room, distributed on the bed, the window sills, and the boxes.

The Big Fellow dropped a pair of drawers and turned about quickly.

“ That reminds me that I’ve been so concentrated on my job of packing,” he said, “ I forgot to tell you my good news. You know, I never could have got through college if it hadn’t been for outside work. Well, this morning Colonel Walker was asking me the same question you have been asking, and I told him I was out to get a job of any kind and pay my way to study law—just as I tell everybody—never thinking of offering myself to him; and Glory be! if he didn’t say he’d give me something in some of his interests, and I’m going to the city to-morrow on my way home to be assigned to some work or other by one of

his managers. But he says I'll have to get law out of my head. 'You can hire lawyers,' he said."

After everybody had congratulated him and told him how lucky he was, Ramsdell asked from the window sill, with a strange inflection:

"Did Ned speak for you?"

"No, not that I know of," Big answered.

Ned was the Colonel's son, also of '88, and the champion college heavyweight. He was never seen in Charlotte Square, No. 22 West, third floor front.

"I don't know of anything better for a 'grad' to fall into than Colonel Walker's good favor," Ramsdell added.

"It gave me a new idea of him, considering that my father once pretty near put him in jail. He said: 'If you're made of the stuff the old block was, I want you.'"

"You weren't meant for business." It was Ramsdell again.

"I reckon, though, I'd stick to business—if I had a chance. Money's a great thing when you need it the way the Harden family does. Madame Mother and Aunt Julia ought to have more comforts. Two Braids must have an education, and when a man gets a chance and it's his duty, he ought——"

A knock interrupted him. The Big Fellow sang out to come in, in a voice loud enough to be heard in the lower hall, a voice as thunderously out of keeping in *welcoming the little woman who opened*

the stained, varnish-cracked door as a whirlwind sent for a leaf.

“ Is there anything I can do to help you, Mister Big Fellow? ” Mrs. Billings, the landlady, asked.

She had not come for that purpose at all. It was the excuse for the same errand that had brought the others. She wanted to say another farewell and hear the Big Fellow’s laugh, but the sudden sight of the dismantled room gave her a shiver. With customary foresight she took her handkerchief out of her belt bag at once, to be prepared for the worst.

“ I didn’t know I’d feel it so, ” she said. “ It’s been four years, Mister Big Fellow—I’ve called you that from the first day, haven’t I?—and I’ll miss you so! How I did scold you for burning so much oil when you first came, didn’t I? And how I was afraid you’d shake the house down when you went up and down nights! ”

“ Toothache, Big? ” one of them asked.

The Big Fellow laughed.

“ Toothache! ” quoth Mrs. Billings, in high-pitched sarcasm. “ No. He’s always doing it ”—a habit which was new to them. “ Not toothache! Blackstone and Abraham, so far as I could ever make out. And I’ve got so used to your walk on the stairs! ” By this time Mrs. Billings was incoherent and using her handkerchief freely. “ Oh, I know all their walks. Some go falling down and some thumping on their heels and some that come home late at *night*, I’m sorry to say, take two or three steps on

one stair, kind of uncertain, as if they were afraid it was sliding out from under, and then hang onto the banisters, I guess. And you're the only one I ever had that didn't take two steps at a time. You don't run either up or down, Mister Big Fellow. You just go plowing on, taking every stair, and quick, too! I'll miss that regular squeak and your 'Hello!' for coffee, that's loud as the chapel bell, and coming down yourself half-way to get it. You're so big and simple I'm afraid for you when you get out in the hard, cold world."

This was too much for even senior gravity. Mrs. Billings thought that the series of mirthful explosions were directed at her. She let her handkerchief fall and looked through her tears, hurt and shamed to be caught in a lodger's room in such an unbusinesslike, not to say unbecoming, outburst.

"It's myself on whom these ruffians are venting their buffoonery," said the Big Fellow, rising to the occasion. "They see how good you are in order to see so much good in another ruffian. I'd like to stay here as a student forever, were such glorious folly in keeping with the temper of the times, when every man ought to be at work. Better men will come to take my place. Whether they fall downstairs or slide upstairs, they'll all love you. Be joyful over the friends that will never forget you. Here's to Mrs. Billings! Drive dull sorrow away! Here we go 'round the mulberry bush!"

She found her right hand in the Big Fellow's.

and her left hand in Ramsdell's, as they circled the trunk, dodging between the boxes containing Abraham and Blackstone, tripping on the Big Fellow's nether garment, the little lady half laughing and half crying, till her breathlessness brought them to a standstill.

"Mrs. Billings, I salute you. You are the queen of hostesses."

The Big Fellow, with a deep bow, took her chin in his hands and most deliberately planted a kiss on her forehead. A blush crept up from the faded old cheeks, suffusing the pathway of her tears.

"For shame!" she cried; and in her hasty withdrawal from an experience which would be one of her most treasured memories as she listened in her basement room for the different manner of squeaks till every lodger was abed, she nearly ran into Willy Sweetser entering—Willy, with his silver-headed cane and eyes popping with deviltry and the inevitable cigarette between his fingers. The Big Fellow called him "House Afire."

Nobody knew just how he had ever secured his diploma, unless by natural wit, inveterate curiosity, and absorption. He had done no studying to anyone's knowledge, yet he was remarkably ready in a certain characteristic way at recitations. In making mischief he became a post-graduate in his freshman year. It was always difficult—for himself, perhaps, as well as for others—to tell whether he was joking or not.

"Say, Big, Ned Walker never did seem to like you," he remarked, with his eyes inverted as he

put a match to a fresh cigarette. "What do you think he said about you to-day? Why, he——" And Willy, unable to resist the sensation, had told that which he had not meant to tell.

The Big Fellow laughed. It was a short, hearty, infectious laugh, freely given from his deep lungs, no different than they had heard a thousand times. Ramsdell called it a "sawing wood" laugh. He would give it in idle welcome and give it when he was interrupted at any task, and then without a word go on with his work. Now he dropped that nether garment half folded on the trunk and interrogated Willy.

"He said that, did he?"

It was a thing which went back to his father, a thing, knowingly worded, which ate into Big like acid.

"Yes," assented Willy, somewhat hesitantly. The figure towering over him was Cyclopean and ominous. Suddenly he was struck with the disconcerting idea that it might be loaded with dynamite. "But look here, Big, I shouldn't have repeated that. Forget it!" Willy was worried. It looked to him as if Big were getting mad and it had never occurred to him before that this was possible.

"Yes, but you did repeat it and you do not deny that he said it. I'll stop packing and go to see him."

The Big Fellow took his coat off the bedpost where it was hanging and drew it on.

Willy was *aghast between curiosity and nervous*

dread, for he was fonder of Big than of anyone else at college and Big had often been his champion when he was in trouble.

“ You’ll not have to go far! ” said Ramsdell. “ Ned Walker’s coming along the street now. ”

“ I’ll get back on the job all the sooner, ” was the giant’s smiling answer.

Without waiting for his hat he started for the door.

“ You aren’t going to do anything serious, are you, Big? ” asked Ramsdell.

Big’s retreating back along the hall indicated no consciousness of having heard the question.

“ Did you look at his eyes ? ” exclaimed Willy, almost tragically. “ They weren’t laughing. They glittered like a bayonet on a frosty morning. ”

“ His eyes never do laugh—only the rest of his face and his lungs, ” Ramsdell told him. “ You’d known that before if you were half as observing as you are meddlesome. But I confess I never saw them steely like that, myself. We’d better go along. ”

Squeak, squeak the old stairs groaned as the Big Fellow descended, with steady, rapid stride. Until he reached the door he was unconscious that he was followed. When he looked around and saw no less than seven retainers, he said:

“ Make yourselves at home. I’ll run out to see Ned alone, if you please. I don’t want to leave the old Alma with any misunderstanding with *anybody* of the class of ’88. ”

"But look here, Big," groaned Willy, who felt responsible, "you aren't going to——"

"I'm going out alone and I hope to make a friend."

"Of course he's not going to——" Ramsdell drew Willy back into the doorway. For his part, Ramsdell was quite reassured on this score. "You know Big as well as I do. He's going to clear up any differences in his characteristic way. A good thing, too, considering that he's to work for Ned's father and he and Ned have never hit it off together."

"Walker's pretty near as tall as Big," mused Willy, as he watched the Big Fellow turn in the direction from which Walker was coming not twenty yards away. "I am all interest. You can't tell what might happen!"

Willy, who had had the remark first-hand from Ned, could not get away from a certain idea since he had seen that look in the Big Fellow's eye. The two men met just in front of the canna bed of No. 24, next door, which in flagging, grass plot, and its old wrought-iron fence was the same as No. 22, except that Mrs. Billings favored geraniums, in which she saw a distinction and a difference for No. 22, never being able to understand how anybody could make a mistake between the two places, particularly in summer time.

"Hello, Ned!"

"Howdy do, Harden."

"Ned, Willy Sweetser's been tale-bearing again," the Big Fellow began, good-naturedly.

“ He told me something that you said which made me come right to you to see if we can straighten it out; and if you do feel that way, I would like to know why ”—and he repeated Willy’s report.

His Jove-like open manner and his seeming confidence that a friendly talk would settle anything irritated Walker uncontrollably. Though Ned’s father was small, the son had inherited his mother’s physique.

“ Yes, I did,” he answered hotly, “ and I say it again, and so was your father before you.”

Ramsdell and the others in the doorway saw the Big Fellow’s arm shoot out and Walker would have gone to the ground if he had not caught hold of the fence, on which he leaned for a dizzy interval. Big stepped back, abashed by his own act, confused in everything except that he might have to defend himself.

“ Gee! Big looks like a Pillar of Hercules and Ned’s always in training!” gasped Willy Sweetser.

“ You said my father!” Big declared, taking a deep breath.

“ Yes. I ought not to have included him. I retract that,” Walker returned, as he recovered himself and stood solidly on his feet again, ready and defiant, yet not taking the aggressive.

The Big Fellow offered his hand.

“ But I don’t take back what I said about you,” Walker added, as he refused it.

“ I’m sorry. Do you care to give me any reason, Ned?” the Big Fellow asked, almost

anxiously. "Leaving my father out makes it different, anyway. Time will prove whether you are right about me."

After a second's silence Walker said "No," and passed on, resuming his walk.

"Good-afternoon, Ned!" the Big Fellow called after him.

"Good-afternoon, Harden," Walker responded.

The waiting group on the steps was equally puzzled by Walker's failure to strike back and by the Big Fellow's seeming dejection as he returned. He put one hand on Ramsdell's and the other on Sweetser's shoulder appealingly.

"Trembling like a leaf!" exclaimed Willy, who had made a discovery. "Why—Big has nerves!" Willy, you see, was a natural publicist, who had to tell anything he saw or heard.

"I had to do it when he mentioned my father. I was mad," said the Big Fellow; and this seemed all he had to say, for, without another word, he went past them and on up the stairs, the presence of his friends seemingly forgotten.

Were they to follow him, as so many street boys follow the winner of an alley fisticuffs? They stood watching his ascent, and he settled their doubts when he turned on the first landing and asked if they weren't coming.

Willy Sweetser was for doing two steps at a time. His curiosity was not half satisfied. The others evidently thought it was time for departure, and Willy decided not to go alone.

"Big, your quarrel won't make any difference

with the Colonel," Ramsdell called. "He never lets sentiment interfere with business. If he wants to take you on he'll take you."

"Oh, to the devil with that job!" answered the Big Fellow, and the second flight began groaning under his weight. "I'm going to stick to Abraham and Blackstone."

"He's so cut up," complained Willy, "that he will not even say good-by"—in which Willy was mistaken; for after they were out in the street they heard a window raised and then that well-known, pleasant, even voice:

"Good-by! Good luck!" hallooed the Big Fellow, with his head out of the lower sash frame. "Have a good time in Europe, Ramsdell. Remember we're all to write. Buck the line hard! '88's going to be a power for good in the world!"

When he looked back into the room he was reminded by the sight of the soap and catsup boxes that rushing into a public street and knocking a man down in a burst of temper, was not quite in keeping with the books inside them or with the character of a man whose ambition was to know and interpret the law.

"Madame Mother, you are scolding me," he said to one of the two portraits still resting on his desk. They were to be the last things to go into a safe place in the top tray. "I believe you are pointing a finger, too, Miss Two Braids. But I had to do it."

As he was not going to the city now, there was ample time for packing before he took the morn-

ing train. Sitting on the ancient piano stool among the ruins of his old room, he went over again the manuscript on the Colonial Administration of the Romans which he was writing for a prize for a law review. A little note to Colonel Walker, thanking him and stating that he had changed his mind, then a long letter to his mother, telling about the disgraceful thing he had to do—it was easier to write this than to tell it—and a note about it to Miss Two Braids, who in his own mind, at least, held him to a sort of accountability, then back to the essay!

Well into the morning, with his back so stiff that any part of it would have touched a vertical line—a pillar of healthy youth—tracing a small, copperplate hand that seemed a calculated insult to the size of the fist that drove the pen, he burnt Mrs. Billings's oil in a final spree before tackling the world.

II

ENTER THE HOME FOLK

IN fact, the oil ran out and he had to stumble over the soap and the catsup boxes to bed in the darkness. When he awoke he thundered for coffee, and recalling that he had not finished certain corrections in his manuscript, became so absorbed that he was unconscious of the need of breakfast till Mrs. Billings stood at his elbow with the tray.

“ Oh! Just food—as if food was of any importance, good lady, when a man is busy with a *magnum opus*! ” he told her, oracularly. “ I had a beautiful time last night. I rewrote two whole pages twice and then cut them out altogether, and you can’t guess what an improvement this made. But there’s an end of it! ”

He slipped the manuscript into an addressed envelope, which he sealed and laid on the top of the desk beside the photograph of Miss Two Braids, where he would be sure to see it when he came to go. Then he moved the ink well to make room for the tray.

“ If it’s *magnum opus* that makes you lose sleep, I do hope you’ll get better now it’s off your mind,” Mrs. Billings affirmed, dryly.

“Consider winning a prize of one hundred dollars in A.D. 1888 with an essay on Roman Colonial Administration by jumping the subject and showing how we should set about civilizing a new country to-day! Consider what the poor Romans have suffered from writers for two thousand years! Incidentally, consider that I haven’t won that prize yet!” he continued, his mind still dwelling on his masterpiece as he cut an egg in two and proceeded to make two mouthfuls of it. “If I do win it I’ll give you five dollars toward the oil.”

“Nothing of the kind, you silly fellow! And do you know what the hour is?”

“No. Wh-h-at?” came through a munch of toast, in the surprise of his recollection that there was such a thing as time.

“Eight, and you ordered the express at eight.”

“Did I?” He took the rest of his coffee in a draught and jumped up. “Did I? Then watch me in action.”

“Can I help?” she asked.

“No. You’d interfere with the system. I’ve got it all organized—organized like a Roman colony. I know where everything is. Can’t you see I do?”

In what seemed to Mrs. Billings most foolish and unwarranted exultation, he looked from her to the heterogeneous things piled around the trunk.

“No, I can’t. And nobody but a man could!” she snapped.

“ In twenty minutes you will see this trunk going downstairs and you’ll wonder how I did it. Between you and me, I shall, myself.”

He took off his coat and sprang for the nether garment that had remained untouched since last evening.

“ I shan’t. I shall gasp and so will you when you come to unpack the muss. There’s a ring at the bell now! ” and she withdrew, her fears augmented as to his future in a matter-of-fact age.

That he did finish packing in twenty minutes no one can deny, the protesting expressman being a witness to the fact that when Somebody on Torts will not be compressed to the size of a First Reader, or a tennis racket folded up like a fan, even with their owner’s whole weight on the trunk lid, they and other things of unaccommodating rigidity have to be left outside to be carried by hand.

As he descended the stairs, his aspect was that of a man who had gathered up all the articles he could before his retreat from a burning building. Between his two free fingers he carried the envelope addressed to *The International Law Review*. The tactical situation was such, as he explained to Mrs. Billings, that he would have partly to dismantle in order to lift up the mail box lid.

Mrs. Billings herself took charge of starting the *magnum opus* on its journey. This done at the first street corner, she asked him, cargo-bound as he was, how he was ever going to buy his ticket and check his trunk.

“ Drop things and pick them up again, I guess,” was the only solution that occurred to him.

She suggested a better way. Bareheaded, she walked beside the self-borne caravan to the station. There, without dropping anything but a soft hat, he was able by throwing his shoulders apart to make sufficient opening in the overlapping impedimenta hung from either arm, to enable the fiduciary agent to fish the one ten-dollar bill to his name out of his pocket. She stuffed back the change and the token of brass just before the call of “ All aboard! ”

Completely blocking the rear platform on which he stood, with a choking in his throat, he watched the little woman alternately wiping her eyes with her handkerchief and waving it—and he was happy to have the last glimpse a wave.

“ That’s some capital—to have Mrs. Billings’s love,” he thought, gratefully. Once he had occupied a seat, he was assured of having it to himself. There was no room for anybody or anything else. Over the shoulder of the man in front of him he saw the morning paper for the first time, and glaring at him were the headlines, “ Thrashed Young Millionaire ! ” with a full account—any details to make the story interesting having accrued with its travel from mouth to mouth to a reporter’s ear. “ Young Harden’s father, it will be recalled, won State prominence by his prosecution of Colonel Walker, some twenty years ago ”—ran the explanation which gave the narrative its *sensational importance*.

“ I was mad. I couldn't help it.” He knew that under the same circumstances he would do the same thing again.

For the rest of the journey his thoughts were on the home folks and his future. By this time Epaminanidad must have brought them the letters with his version of the incident which he had posted the night before. How would they receive it? And what was he to do to earn the money to finish his course in law? He could be most definite, he found, in thinking of Abraham and Blackstone, but on the problem of making a living he was most indefinite.

The conductor's call of “ Bolton! ” brought a struggle with a more immediate practical problem—when a raincoat had slipped to the floor and with it a hairbrush out of a pocket—solved, however, thanks to the good offices of a fellow passenger, who tried to keep a straight face while he acted as loader.

Bolton was a small town which had fallen into decay without even the distinction of being a county seat that saves the dignity of many decayed towns which see their industries drawn away by railroad centers and farmers go by their doors to a larger market. An island in the midst of increasing population, it had lost population.

The Harden home was well out past the post-office and the stores and the churches on the main street, which was but a dusty road, whose turning past the Episcopal church brought him in sight of the old brick house in a two-acre lot, with many

generous shade trees, most of them, except the old elm—which he delightedly saw showed never a dead limb among its languid plumes—planted by his father. But something—something which he could not place—had changed in the picture, though Epaminanidad, a looked-for figure in the foreground, was waiting at the gate, which he opened to let the Big Fellow in.

“Hello, Pam! How’re you doing? Shake hands with you as soon as I have a hand to spare!”

“Yissah, it’s yo’!” Epaminanidad screened his eyes with his knuckly black hand. “Yo’ bigness is fillin’ to de eyes, an’ yo’ voice is cheery.”

“Now I know what it is!” the Big Fellow exclaimed. “The lawn hasn’t been clipped! Going to make hay? Has Betty lockjaw?”

Epaminanidad had told himself that this would come the first shot out of the box, and here was dire prophecy fulfilled. Sore hit, he dropped to the rear without a word.

“What about Two Braids? I thought she would meet me at the station,” the Big Fellow asked, postponing the evil moment for Pam.

She had a better plan, of which the returning alumnus was advised suddenly from ambush. A ripe cherry flew past his eyes and then one struck him fairly on the cheek, as he looked upward into the cherry-tree shading the path to see Miss Ellen Moore, in the mischief of twelve years, seated on the limb, firing what seemed an unlimited store of ammunition.

“ I refuse to surrender or run! ” he shouted.

Aching fingers let all his baggage fall in havoc around him, except Somebody on Torts, which is a thing to be treated with respect and which he laid gently on the ground.

“ Great lady, I’m glad to see that you have not done your hair high yet,” he observed. “ It will be considered in your favor when I catch you. I’m coming up.”

“ Don’t—don’t! You’ll break all the limbs! I’ll come down, Jim! ” she answered.

He held out his arms; she partly leaped and partly fell into them, and before he put her down he shook her in rollicking playfulness.

“ And how’s she been treating you, Pam? ” he asked.

Head askew, Pam was surveying the pile which the Big Fellow had dropped.

“ Well, she don’ call me factotum no mo’. Mis’ Julia made her stop. I kin stand anyt’ing but dat, f’r I ain’ no factotum—anyt’ing but dat an’ dem Greeks. An’ she ain’ filled mah shoes wif shucks oftener’n ushal. An’ I done got even wif her by tyin’ her braids roun’ de po’ch pos’ when she’s a-puckerin’ her fo’haid ovah her books like she got a whole houseful o’ trubbles in her brain.”

“ But I just kept on studying till it was untied,” she retorted.

“ Allus de las’ word! ” groaned Pam. “ An’ what I’d like to know, Mistah Jim, is how yo’ evah carried all dem t’ings, bein’ yo’ ain’ quite so big’s an elephant er a camel.”

Pam picked up a portion of "dem t'ings" and followed the Big Fellow and Miss Two Braids up the gravel walk to where two old ladies stood on the steps, framed in the opening of the honeysuckle vines that overran the porch.

"Here he is!" cried Miss Two Braids, running ahead, and "Yeah he air!" said Pam from the rear, as if the Big Fellow were shadowy and intangible, being visible to the naked eye only when pointed out.

"Was ever man so lucky as I in the matter of a mother and an aunt?" he said, as he kissed both old ladies.

Then he looked his fill of the loved faces, and Madame Mother—as he had named her—and Aunt Julia looked their fill of him.

"I don't believe he has—not an inch!" observed Aunt Julia, judicially.

"I should hope not!" said Madame Mother. "Not at twenty-two!"

"Measure there and see! There's the old mark we made a year ago," Aunt Julia bade him; and he obediently put his back against one of the porch pillars.

Epaminanidad squinted and raised himself on tiptoe, while Miss Two Braids brought a chair and then put Somebody on Torts—which did have practical uses, she found—on the chair, and mounting, was able to pull a lock of hair at the same time that everybody laughed and decided that he hadn't—not a little finger's width.

"Oh, Madame Mother, you don't look over

forty; and you, Aunt Julia—why, your rosy cheeks justify the record in the family Bible that you are her younger sister. Why couldn't you come to the graduation? You could have had my room and Mrs. Billings would have put me on a cot in the garret."

"We did intend coming," Madame Mother began, "and—and——"

"Then Martha wasn't feeling well," from Aunt Julia, helpfully.

Poor dissemblers, they, counting the railroad fare to the college town and back an insuperable barrier to a dearest wish!

"I presume you'd like to wash off the dust of travel," suggested Aunt Julia, lest he should pursue this lead further.

Their welcome seemed more subdued than he had expected; their usual brightness—except Miss Two Braids'—lacking. Had they read his letter about his brawl in the street? And the morning paper? Were they ashamed of him?

Meanwhile, the sight of familiar home marks, as he hung his hat on the old hall rack, drove all other ideas away. A minute later, in his own room, his head was dipped in cool spring water, and afterward, out of graduate curiosity, as he waited on Pam's second trip, he took down some of his boyhood schoolbooks from the hanging shelf at the head of the bed.

"I took your algebra and your first Latin lessons and put back the Fifth Reader," chirped

Miss Two Braids, looking in for a moment, as she tied an apron. "Algebra is simply horrible. It isn't practical, either. I've burned my fingers *more* times on the stove since I got out of simple arithmetic!"

Then she flew downstairs to the kitchen, having uttered her defiance of liberal education to one of its profound exponents.

Out of the pockets of the overcoat of that profound exponent Epaminanidad, on arriving, removed a penholder, two fire insurance blotters, a piece of the original manuscript of the essay, a baseball, two pairs of socks and a collar. In the inside pocket were the photographs of Madame Mother and Miss Two Braids, wrapped in handkerchiefs and pinned in carefully. The Big Fellow put them on top of the bookshelf.

"Dat's all of yo' traps," said Pam, "an' I reckon I'd bettah go down an' he'p wif de supper. I he'ps roun' de house all I kin since Betty—since——"

"Since what?" asked the Big Fellow, who, having found his hairbrush, was brushing his hair.

"Since—since I 'gan to he'p 'bout de house. I—Ise got to dress an' git ready," he mumbled, as he beat a retreat, feeling himself most unmanly to leave the narration of the truth to others when he felt morally to blame for the catastrophe which weighed on his mind.

Dressing for supper was scarcely an elaborate function for Pam, but it could be made to serve as

a flying excuse. Miss Two Braids said that he was like the invariable character in books about the South and admittedly little could happen in that family without his playing a part. The story of how he came to be in this Northern household may be traced back to a crisis in the career of one of Morgan's Raiders, who had to travel so fast that his servant was left behind to drift about until he attached himself to James Harden, Sr. His true name, so it had been intimated to him from youthful heights, when the Big Fellow first explored Grecian history, must be Epaminondas—a heresy which Pam disposed of by the purest logic, and ever afterward he was against the Greeks on all occasions.

“Epaminanidad I heerd it fust, an’ Epaminanidad it is,” he had said, “an’ I ain’ askin’ nuffin from de Greeks as to what it was my mother call’ me—not at my age I ain’!”

He stood behind Madame Mother's chair at the simple meal, set among as much of her wedding silver and Aunt Julia's wedding silver and their mother's and grandmother's wedding silver as the table would hold, the rest being on the sideboard.

“I see Mrs. Baxter washes as well as ever. How is she?” the Big Fellow remarked, noting the linen.

Mrs. Baxter had been their washerwoman for years. As Miss Two Braids once said: “Everything about our house has been for years; that is why it is so nice.”

"Well as usual, I think," said Aunt Julia, boldly.

She was the better of the two sisters at evasion.

"An' how's Betty? I nearly forgot her!"

Epaminanidad's courage came like an inspiration.

"It's me yo' oughtah ask dat," he announced.

EPAMINANIDAD

OF affairs of State we shall hear much eventually; of matters most serious to this family we shall hear presently; but first, the whole truth about Betty from Epaminidad, oblivious of the details of service, while Madame Mother put the frizzled beef on the plates which she passed herself and Aunt Julia poured the tea. It is allowable, without detracting from Pam's courage, to entertain a polite suspicion that the opportunity of telling the thing in his own way at length was influential in inducing that inspiration.

“ To sum it up right at de start, I reckon Betty was gittin' mighty ol', an' she wouldn't 'a' fell but fo' mah carefullessness an' dem 'longated hoofs o' hers,” he said. “ Betty was eighteen 'cordin' to our count, an' havin' los' her horns she had no count o' her own. Yo' 'membahs how yo' was gwine on six when we got her, Mistah Jim? Why, Betty was gittin' sort o' middle-aged 'fo' yo' was big 'nuff to took notice, Miss Ellen. Yo' 'membahs, Miss Ellen, how she fotched yo' a wop wif her tail right 'cross de face in fly time—which, I mus' say, is mos' aggervatin'.”

Aunt Julia spoke for Miss Two Braids, whose upbringing was her particular province.

“ Yes, and Ellen was fearfully angry about it,” she remarked. “ She parroted something she’d heard you say, Martha. She said that if Betty had done it intentionally she wanted her punished, and if she hadn’t her education ought to be taken in hand. I suppose you take as many lumps as usual, Jimmy boy? ”

“ Lumps and Jimmy boy! That does sound like home! ” exclaimed the Big Fellow. “ And home ought to be sweetening enough for me, little aunt. ”

“ I’m giving you three. We used to say that the only way was to pour the tea into the sugar bowl and pass you that. And a little milk, I remember. Now that we’ve got used to the condensed we like it quite well. ”

“ An’ Betty was gittin’ powahful slow an’ it did rain powahful hard,” Pam proceeded. “ All dese yeahs I’d been takin’ her out an’ tetherin’ her ev’y mornin’ an’ bringin’ her in at night, an’ talkin’ to her ev’y night when I milked her. I nevah did heah of a cow that so liked talkin’.

“ An’ dem hoofs kep’ on growin’ an’ growin’! Why, dey got longer’n shovels an’ turned up like a swell box cuttah. ’Peahs like if she couldn’t have any horns she’s bound to make up on hoofs. Dey got so bad she didn’ really walk; she skated. An’ I don’ t’ink I oughtah take all de blame, kase dey nevah would let me use mah jedg-

ment 'bout dem hoofs. Why, Mistah Jim, I could 'a' sawed er chopped off six or eight inches 'thout Betty missin' her cud er knowin' any mo' 'bout it 'n if de nex' do' neighbor was sawin' a ham bone. She'd jes' navigated bettah 'thout undahstandin' why.

"Well, on de seventeenth of April, I 'membah de date——"

"We didn't tell you, Jim, because we thought it might interfere with your essay and your thesis and all the other things," Miss Two Braids interjected.

"And we knew how fond you were of Betty," Madame Mother added.

"I done went out fo' Betty at milkin'-time in de rain, an' she was drefle stubbo'n. I guess I jes' los' mah tempah, kase it was a col' rain. 'Yo've got runnahs like a sled, yo' ol' fool, an' I'll pull yo' in if yo' won't lift yo' legs!' I says, mos' cruel. An' 'stid o' givin' a shoulder when she comes to de terrace an' he'pin' her in any way, as I ushally did—yissah, I done let her slide, an' she done went down all of a heap an' broke her legs an' her insides, too, I guess, fo' she nevah got up. An' de ol' lawn mowah jes' all went to pieces nex' day, like trubbles nevah come singly!"

Whereon, Pam lapsed into a hysterical giggle.

"It's not a laughing matter," Aunt Julia warned him; and it was not, for Betty or the family.

"I wasn' laffin'," said Pam, honestly. "It's kase Ise so distressed in mah mind. Someway I

ain' been right since, nohow. I gets ev'yt'ing wrong jes' as easy, jes' as easy as I used to get 'em right. Ise pulled onions fo' weeds, an' Missus won' lemme tech de dishes no mo', kase I breaks 'em. But I kin wash de closes!''—triumphantly—"yis, I kin!" thus explaining family ignorance of the state of Mrs. Baxter's health.

Madame Mother and Aunt Julia gave him a lance which taxed his wits for a way of escape.

"M-m-muh—mah own clothes!" Pam corrected himself, rather tardily.

The two old ladies knew that the truth must come, but in an orderly family it ought to come in order. Big's home-coming and his supper must be as they were in the old days. He divined that they were holding back some secret, and he became himself a silent partner in a plan of which Miss Two Braids was the quickest partisan. She made a diversion by going for the peaches, grown in their own tree and put up pound for pound to please his taste.

It was she, too, who cleared away the dishes swiftly, meanwhile asking the Big Fellow countless questions. Was geometry harder than algebra? Had he really passed ninety in calculus? Were diplomas really made of sheepskin? Would he frame his or put it in the old iron safe in Madame Mother's room? Did it make you feel a bit prouder and older when you got it?

"What can we do? She takes the work out of our hands!" exclaimed Madame Mother.

Poor Epaminanidad, as busy as a French clown

between trying to get out of her way and to help, was triumphantly successful in carrying out a platter and in putting one of the napkins on the sideboard.

“ I’ll wash the dishes! I choose that! ” volunteered the alumnus.

“ Oh, no—no! ” Madame Mother was shocked at the idea.

“ Please let him! Please let Mister Ninety in Calculus! ” pleaded Miss Two Braids. “ I want to see him! ”

“ Please! ” pleaded the Big Fellow himself.

“ You can have my apron,” said Miss Two Braids. “ My! and it’s button strings! What fun! ”

When, in the midst of racing remarks about the breadth of back that had to be spanned, with a piece of cord she had supplied the difference in the size of waists, Mister Ninety in Calculus looked as practical as simple arithmetic, she said. For fear that Pam would go into convulsions, he was sent to see that all the chickens were safe for the night.

“ I can wash faster than you can wipe,” asserted the Big Fellow.

“ No, you can’t—not properly! ”

“ But I am! ”

“ It’s the calculus! I believe it helps as much as algebra hurts.”

The old ladies watched from the doorway. After the task was finished, and after Pam had gone to bed, Aunt Julia looked at Madame Mother

p. significantly. It was prearranged for Madame
a. Mother to do the talking, for she was the senior.

e/ "Jimmy, there is a lot I have to tell you," she
said. "I have kept it back until now because I
wanted to see you have your diploma first."

Miss Two Braids, in the silence that followed,
picked up her book and pencil, understanding that
she was on the wrong side of the gulf of the teens
between twelve and the grown-ups to be in a
family conclave.

"No, Ellen. You are to come, also. You are
old enough and it is right you should know, as
Julia and I have concluded."

With this, Madame Mother erectly led the way
into the parlor, where she had already lighted the
lamp with the glass standard.

IV

A STRAIGHT-BACKED-CHAIR OCCASION

HOW Miss Two Braids came to this family is as simple as the life of the family itself. Her parents had been killed in a railroad accident when she was a baby. This penniless, fledgling grandniece of Aunt Julia, who was childless and a widow, by losing one mother had won two, with Aunt Julia having precedence in authority.

“Girls are easy,” Madame Mother observed, when the sleeping bundle in a woollen blanket arrived.

“Right environment will make it easy,” Aunt Julia decided, immediately feeling her responsibility as guardian.

“Especially with such blood as hers,” Madame Mother asserted.

“But, of course, you know there is some French and some Irish.”

“Which ought to make her all the more charming!”

“It’s rather skittish, though, the French and Irish part, and does need care,” which Aunt Julia determined should not be lacking. “I’m glad I have a little money out at interest, Martha,” she added, “so I feel quite free to take her.”

"Nonsense!" said Madame Mother, as if asking what had money to do with adopting a baby girl who had such wonderful dark eyes. Her own were grey, and she had never liked them.

Miss Two Braids' cheerfulness, a thing constant even in mischief, seemed to be a normal expression of delight and gratitude over the miracle of a trembling bird falling into a downy, strange nest which was practically her own, for she remembered no other.

When the Big Fellow seated himself in a straight-backed chair, after the formal occupation of the parlor, she took the one beside it, the soles of her shoes barely touching the floor. It gave her a sense of security to be near him. When he interlocked his fingers she interlocked hers, quite conscious that she must be doing the proper thing. On the other side of the lamp, its glass standard sunk in a wool mat with red ribbon insertion, were Madame Mother and Aunt Julia, also in straight-backed chairs.

Unexpected thoughts are always flashing into mind when least wanted, and Miss Two Braids caught herself just in time not to say aloud that this seemed to be a straight-backed-chair occasion. She lifted her soles off the floor and determined to keep them off as a reminder of her definite conviction, drawn from experience, that it was not becoming of the youngest member of the council when on trial to say a single word unless she was asked a question.

"You got my letter about—about how I

tried to clear up a misunderstanding with N Walker?" the Big Fellow asked. Their silence on this subject had been the worst kind of punishment for him.

"Yes," exclaimed Madame Mother, with a start. It was not at all the thing which the two old ladies had in mind. What might have been in ordinary times an overwhelming affair to the little household, when precipitated into the midst of the rehearsal of how they were to make their revelations to him, had been completely eclipsed. "You could not have done otherwise under the provocation you had, Jimmy," she announced. "You could do what your father would have done."

So he had not played the bully. It was a relief to him to be acquitted by the gentlest of authorities; and by Aunt Julia, who signalled him with a smile:

"You acted as a man ought to act!" she said snappily. "Never mind if you didn't stop growing till you were nineteen."

"Oh, I was glad—glad!" added Miss Two Braids, her disregarded soles touching the floor in her excitement.

"Ellen!" from Aunt Julia.

Miss Two Braids had resort to severer measures. She crossed her legs and drove the calf hard against the chair seat that it hurt. If she kept up the torture, she reasoned, she was bound not to think of other things which she ought not to think of and always did.

"Though it's not an affair to glory in, but"

to be regretted; and I was happy that you saw it that way," Madame Mother continued. "I was not so proud of it as I was that you refused to work for Colonel Walker. *He* would not have wanted that, either."

She looked up at the oil portrait at the end of the room. In the dimness of the shaded light the forensic mouth and fighting eyes of a man of vigor and middle age stood forth in intellectual aggressiveness from a gilt frame. His high, broad forehead the son had, and in addition the grey eyes and the finely chiseled aquiline nose and the firm chin of his mother. The father's prosecution of Colonel Walker had failed; his investments in small competing companies had been swept away by the Colonel's amalgamations after the acquittal; and his death, Madame Mother thought, was due to persecution, following him to the grave, by this man who had kept himself out of jail and saved himself from the wrath of public opinion by the corrupt use of money.

"No, Jimmy, he would not have wanted that, even if he knew our position." Our position! That gave her the key. She forgot all the words she had rehearsed on sleepless nights. "And our position is pretty bad. I don't well see how it could be worse, except through death or sickness. We have been selfish enough to keep it from you, as I said, till you were graduated."

"No. I am the selfish one. A fool full of books!" he said, the truth dawning on him. "I've been taking money you needed. You have

been going without everything for me! Now see. I—I——”

“How can you say that when we haven’t seen you a penny in six months?”

“I’m mostly to blame, myself,” began Aunt Julia, precisely. “I speculated—yes, I—I did with the little money I had. Mr. Jones, of the church, had a great chance in a mine out West. He put in some of his money. I believe Mr. Herbert did, too, though of course we’ve never known him very well. I thought if I could only multiply it ten times—and it looked as if I could—how I could have a law course and Ellen could have schooling she ought to have. But I lost it all, yes, all!” Aunt Julia concluded, blankly. “I know I’m an awful old fool, Jimmy.”

“No! You are the dearest aunt in the world!” said the Big Fellow, seeing the lamplight through a mist.

“Yes! She is!” cried Miss Two Braids, who got no warning for that.

“No, Julia. I would have done the same if Madame Mother inserted.

“But I *am* an old fool. I’ll not be disputed,” Aunt Julia repeated.

“Since Julia was cheated so we have had no income at all, though I know that you thought we had,” Madame Mother hurried on. “I hate to confess it—but I must tell everything—I’ve borrowed money on the silver and furniture! We haven’t paid the interest on the mortgage for years. I’m afraid we deceived you a little with

we kept you in the idea that we let the mortgage run because the interest was less than what Julia was getting. And property values have been going down. Why, the old place is not worth more than half what it was when your father died. I can't deny that Mr. Hobber is right. It won't sell for two-thirds of what we owe on it. It's the twentieth of June now, and we must give up the house on July first."

"Oh!" A smothered sob came from Miss Two Braids.

The dread announcement left Madame Mother breathless, white and still. There was unbroken silence until the Big Fellow rose and, crossing the room, kissed her on the forehead. Then he began pacing up and down in leonine restlessness.

"A fool full of books!" he kept repeating. A fool full of books, who had let two old ladies go in threadbare frocks for him!

"Now I understand all you've done for me—all!" he said, slowly.

"The law! You must go on with that!" his mother told him, solemnly. "Your father wished it."

"We are quite reconciled to going, now, we've thought of it so much," concluded Aunt Julia. "In the city we can all find something to do—or whatever we conclude is best, Jimmy."

"You're not going!" declared the Big Fellow, with a toss of his head that seemed to dispose of the whole matter. "What do you think I am, good mother and good aunt? Two hundred pounds

of idleness and worthless classical education. Don't you think I'm equal to a little go at the world? Do I look like a dyspeptic or consumptive? I'll see Mr. Hobber about the interest first and then to pay him."

"But Mr. Hobber's mind is made up." Madam Mother smiled a little wanly. He was still a bore to her mind and quite unused to interest paymen and practical affairs.

In the interval in which it seemed as if they had nothing more to say, and he was thinking how he would reconcile them to his giving up the land and asking that Colonel Walker would let him reconsider, they heard the crunch of wheels on the drive. The unusual sound startled them and they waited expectantly for the sound of the bell, which it was the accepted duty of Miss Two Braids to answer. She wiped her eyes and tried to keep her trembling lip firm as she left the room.

V

A BUSINESS CALL

"GOOD-EVENING, Miss. Is Mr. Harden at home? "

A cheerful voice was this, accompanying a fine-wrinkled face, with bright little eyes, grey moustache, and grey hair clustering about the ears. As if he took an affirmative answer for granted, the visitor entered before Miss Two Braids minded her manners enough to say, "Please come in." Callers were so unusual that she was excusable.

"You're his little sister, I take it. No? At any rate, I'm glad to know you."

Miss Two Braids found that she was being treated to the honor of shaking his hand, which was soft and warm and not as lean as its slight owner would lead one to presuppose. He dropped his hat on the rack quite as if he were at home.

"Now, won't you ask Mr. Harden if he will see Colonel Walker a minute about a little matter of business? You better look to Peg's right hind foot," he called from the door in a kind of whinny to the coachman. "Seemed to me as if she had a stone in it."

The Colonel, whose military title was a peaceful relic of National Guard days which had fol-

lowed him through life, rarely came to Bolton Stottstown, whose prosperity had been Bolton's ruin, was on his own railroad line and nearer his new country place, which included his birthplace in its broad acreage; and from here, a distance of some ten miles, he had driven over that evening on an errand which those who knew him would have found characteristic, if puzzling. But, then, he was a puzzling character.

"Well, well! They don't make 'em much bigger'n you are!" he said admiringly to the Big Fellow, who came out of the other room, as he extended that soft, warm hand which he allowed to remain in Big's generous palm for a second. "Wasn't expecting me, were you, Jim?" Calling a man by his first name was one of the Colonel's ways of ingratiating himself on short acquaintance.

"No, I can't say I was," Big returned, pleasantly.

"Well, I ran over to have a talk with you. As it's to be quite a long talk, I hung my hat up on the rack without saying by your leave to this little lady."

"The lamp is in the parlor, Colonel. Come in there."

Madame Mother and Aunt Julia stood on either side of the table and received the visitor with simple, unaffected politeness, as it was fitting that a guest in their own house should be received.

"Good many years since we met, Mrs. Harden," the Colonel said, graciously. "Mine's a busy life

and it's not all as pleasant as some people think."

"Won't you sit down?" asked Madame Mother.

As he turned to an easy-chair he was face to face with the portrait of James Harden, Sr. The Colonel blinked and stood still. He recalled that the last time he was in that room he faced the over-confident, living protagonist. All his affairs were at a crisis then. By the ledger he was bankrupt; he was guilty of bribery, he knew; and he had come to plead for grace which was denied. Yet he had won judge and jury in the end and he had won because business was business. For a time he had been vindictive against Harden, a waste of energy unusual with him. While the rapid growth of his affairs and his success drowned the memory of the old fight, it had been a source of moldering bitterness in this household for nearly twenty years.

"Strong man! Strong man, Harden was!" he remarked aloud, with significant and friendly emphasis; but he was thinking: "The boy's got more chin than his dad."

"A good one!" Madame Mother observed, icily.

"None better—none! He stood for principle," the Colonel agreed, most affably, as he seated himself. He always agreed, not from calculation but from instinct, on all extraneous matters when he had an object in view. "Well, little lady, won't you sit on an arm of the chair?" he asked, holding out a hand to Miss Two Braids, who stood

in the doorway and suddenly reminded herself that it was bad manners to stare.

“The glue’s weak in ’most all our chairs—it’s not wise,” she demurred, returning to her place beside the Big Fellow.

She hoped that she had been polite, but she did not like being called “little lady” by a stranger in such a patronizing manner. The Colonel reminded her of a squirrel asking for nuts, and the idea so pleased her that she would like to have whispered it to Big.

“I see you’ve been properly brought up. Wisdom’s the greatest thing in the world”—one of the Colonel’s favorite platitudes. He thought it was original. “Well, I guess you know what brought me here. Ned told me how you hit him—his jaw’s a little sore, too. You did right, absolutely. I’ve been talking it over with him and he’s ashamed of what he said, and he ought to be. You jumped him about it; he was mad and stood by his guns; but he knew he was wrong or he’d have hit you back, for Ned’s no coward. When I got your letter I said, that’s more of your manliness, and as I’ve some idle time on my hands I’ll run down and see you.”

Looked at in one light, it was farcical for the richest man in the State, who controlled its politics and resources largely, to come in person to seek the services of one of thousands of graduates turned out of the colleges that year. Either Colonel Walker was eccentric or the world was, as you please. He had been more successful

than all save one or two out of every million of the world's inhabitants, and the secret of his success was in his choice of the men who worked for him. He never looked a man over without thinking how can I use him to make a dollar for me every time he makes one for himself.

"Well, when I pinned Ned right down to it," continued the Colonel, "the worst he could say about you was that he thought you played to the crowd and was something of a bluff; and I said, well, if he is, he is good at it, and I don't know but a successful bluff is better than a full house that loses. Bluff, eh? I put it right up to Ned. Look at the hold he has on the college men!"—now speaking directly to Madame Mother. "Ne-eh!" the Colonel whinnied. "Mix all those students up in a crowd and suppose that they were strangers to one another, and if the Big Fellow said, 'Come this way,' they'd come, and if he said, 'Go that way,' they'd go."

The Colonel was friendly; his whinnying voice had a certain magnetic charm. You might have thought him one of the family. His personality seemed to dominate all the room except a little area around the Big Fellow, who said:

"I guess I'm so tall I'd be the only one they'd see above the heads of the rest."

"Yes, that's part of it. Ne-eh! What matters it why they follow you, if they only follow?" This was an unconscious revelation of the Colonel's self. "Now, the other day I said I didn't want you for the law. I'll put it another way. I'll give

you a chance to study law. I wouldn't mind having one lawyer that people liked. Most of mine have been pretty unpopular."

"If I were going with you I'd rather drop law and go in for business," answered Big, promptly. "Yes, much rather. Then I would know where I stood."

The Colonel did not try to conceal his delight.

"Now you're talking! I'll give you a hundred dollars a month for the first six months; two hundred the next, and twice that every year for the next three years on a four-year contract. You'll be in the great game, young man, developing the resources of this country"—after wisdom the Colonel's favorite hobby, only he wanted to have personal charge of all the development work.

All obligations requited! Comfort for Madame Mother and Aunt Julia! Education for Miss Two Braids! In that way the Big Fellow, taking his time to answer, summed it up on one side. On the other, what? Ned had not come in person to see him and Ned's remark had bitten deep. In it was a defiance to Big to prove himself. And was he to give up his Blackstone? The career he loved? Why not? Was it not only a college ideal? Had he any right to consider it for a moment? Then his eye caught Madame Mother's. She would not speak a word aloud. He was twenty-two, she was thinking; he must decide for himself. But he was on trial before her and her memory of her husband. Her glance plainly told him: "If you

accept anything or have anything to do with this man, you will break my heart."

The Big Fellow rose, smiling, not as if bidding the guest to go, but as if he saw that it was in the guest's mind to go, and, perforce, Colonel Walker rose, too.

"I thank you, Colonel. You have done me a great honor, and with no prejudice and probably for no reasonable cause I am going to refuse."

"Well—well, have your own way. I shan't make the offer again." He had been perfectly sure of winning.

"If I wanted to reconsider now I wouldn't be worthy of it," was the reply.

"You'll regret it. You're making a mistake."

The Big Fellow seemed to be dominating all the atmosphere of the room.

"I'm only twenty-two—twenty years from now we can tell better."

And the world would know then, too, whether or not Colonel Walker was wasting time to try to bring this human force in its plastic age into the service of his properties.

"Well, I'll be dammed!" the Colonel blurted at the door. "Gad! You're an immense fellow, no doubt. I'm not up to your shoulder. Ne-eh! Do you expect to settle in this State?"

"Yes."

"Not in Bolton?"

"Oh, no. Farther afield. Plans not entirely made yet. Will start day after to-morrow, however," answered the Big Fellow, good-humoredly.

“Ne-eh! We’ll meet again, Mr. Giant. Good-night!”

“Good-night!”

When they heard the carriage wheels and thus were certain that the visitor had gone, the two old ladies came to the Big Fellow holding out their hands, their pale, tranquil faces suffused with pride and delight. He put his arms around them.

“But there’s no place for you. I haven’t a third arm!” he said to Miss Two Braids. “Oh, I have it! The best of all!”

“Oh, you can’t! I’m too big, now. I weigh sixty-eight pounds!” she cried.

“I certainly can. You folks at home must think I’m an invalid.”

It was a triumphant journey for Ellen to be borne aloft so steadily and powerfully to a place on his shoulder.

“Here we are, the whole family united—Spartan mother, Spartan aunt, prodigal, and the joy of the house!” he said, with a great shout. “For the prodigal it’s a time for action. To-morrow I convince Mr. Hobber that he must let us stay and wait for the interest.”

“I know how you’re going to convince Mr. Hobber,” said Miss Two Braids. “You’re going to knock him down.” She thought that the Big Fellow’s size was a sovereign arbiter for differences with anybody.

“Ellen!” from Aunt Julia.

“Let him fall on something soft,” she persisted, in a whisper, as she twisted a lock of hair

around her finger. "Maybe you'll only have to threaten. 'Twouldn't do to have Mr. Hobber miss passing the box in church. He's passed it ever since the world began"—her world, at any rate.

Leaning on his strength and listening to his assurances that "It will be all right! Let everybody sleep like a top!" it seemed as if he might summon money out of the skies. As Aunt Julia sat on the edge of Madame Mother's bed before retiring, the two enjoyed the victory for principle, as they called it. Their patient training had borne fruit; their love was rewarded. Yes, these two old ladies had lived to see Colonel Walker beaten; and this was their grateful thought, mindless of all else, as they said their evening prayers together.

VI

SPLINTERED LIGHTNING AND FIREFLIES

AFTER the Big Fellow had gone to his room came footsteps along the hall—sh-h, soft and slow and stealthy; and after the last one just outside the door—sh-h, three gentle taps.

“Hello!” he called, and—sh-h, the door was cautiously opened wide enough for Miss Two Braids’ head, without the braids, to appear and to express her state of mind in a stage whisper.

“Oh, I know I can’t sleep! The moonlight would pry my eyes open if I tried. I’m wide awake as the stars!”

“Ellen!” he warned her, with his finger to his lips in Aunt Julia’s best manner.

“Yes’m, sir! But I want to talk to someone and be talked to, just for talking’s sake, and—and about nothing in particular.”

“So do I,” in a stage whisper, to harmonize himself with her mysteriousness; “and in that case only two people are necessary to make up a game. Come on! Sh-h!”

He unlocked the casement which opened onto the roof of the porch, where the moonlight made the dew on the floor crystalline bluish bright and set deep shadows under the railings and eaves.

“Do you think it will?” he asked in mock

seriousness, as he put his hands on the arms of a weather-beaten rustic chair.

“ Better go careful. Think what a squash it would make if it did break, you’re so big! ”

The chair stood the test. She dropped on a little stool at his side and laid her head against his knee. Without waiting for a toss-up for sides she chose the “ ins ” and began talking at once.

“ My! Hasn’t it been—a full evening! ” she sighed. “ It was like tearing cloth at supper—rip-rip, so slow and knowing you hadn’t come to the seams, and—and were you ever going to? After we went into the sitting-room it was like lightning when it splinters.”

“ When does lightning splinter? ” he asked.

“ Oh, after dreadfully hot weather. You don’t see it. You feel it. The splinters come when it seems to break off in the sky. They go knitting all through you and you tingle and wait for the thunder crack. It’s awful suspense. In the sitting-room it was worse. It was like lightning splintering in the moonlight and no thunder cracks.” She paused. “ M-m-m! Can you guess what else I was thinking—at least, some of the time? ”

He gave up that riddle without a try.

“ I was wondering if we would have a grand firefly party some day to pay for the lightning. After the storm, in the evening, the fireflies play around the foot of the oak. All the tingles are gone and, just happy, I put up my shade and watch them till *I fall asleep.* ”

“Two Braids, I think you have too much imagination for algebra.”

“It’s not imagination. It’s just the way I see it.”

She had a practical vein, as well.

“I really don’t think it’s best to knock Mr. Hobber down, though it would be just as easy for you to knock down sixteen Mr. Hobbers in a row. You just hold him against the wall, quiet and kind like, till he gives up.”

He patted her cheek affectionately. Any kind of foolishness from her was pleasant.

“All right. If one way won’t do I’ll try another.”

“Only, if you have to knock him down to win, don’t hesitate, for Aunt Julia’s and Aunt Martha’s sake. They’ve been so good to me and I love them so! Think! when they were so poor never telling me of it and forgiving me for being mischievous, when I can’t keep from it. Probably they know I can’t and that’s why they forgive me; and that makes them all the kinder, doesn’t it? And, oh!” she sobbed, “I can’t do anything to help except love everybody—and not cry. There! I’m not crying, am I?”

“Not a tear!”

“And when Mr. Hobber says, ‘Please let me go, I’ll be good,’ then what are you going to do, Mr. Ninety in Calculus?”

She pinched his chin and looked up, smiling, just to prove that she had not been crying.

“I’m going to make money, first.”

“ My—yes! It’s so easy for Colonel Walker to make money. You can see that just as plain. But I’m dreadfully afraid it’s not for you. Seems to me, Jim, just as if you know so much of everything else that there isn’t any room for that. Oh, I wish I could help! I—I wonder what I could do. Yes, I could be a cash girl. I saw them in the store once when I was in Stottstown. All they have to do is to run back and forth, and I’m a good runner. Will you ask Aunt Julia to let me try? ”

“ I think we’ll dismiss that idea,” he said. “ You keep on loving everybody and going to school.”

“ But *how* are *you* to make money? I—I think *that* is a *very* important question,” she pursued.

“ I know, but I haven’t told anybody yet. I’m going to the city to take the first work I can get at anything.”

“ Now we’re getting splintery,” she said, with a frown. “ I won’t ask any more questions ’cept one. I’ve been thinking of that the whole evening. If—if you didn’t have to get money for us at home, what would you like to do when you are a man—I mean, when you are a real world’s man, by the time I’m grown up? ”

“ Well, if I tell you, you won’t tell? ”

“ No. Cross my heart, hope to——”

“ Because if you do tell, sometimes I think it will never happen. You see, if I went with Colonel Walker and became his lawyer I’d always have to plead his cases, whether right or wrong, being in his pay. I could not plead them very

well sometimes. I would have to be untrue to what he hired me for, or untrue to myself. Not that Colonel Walker ought not to have his side stated; but other men could do that better."

"But he ought not! He's an old spider and such a smart spider!" Miss Two Braids was not of the judicial temperament herself.

"I'd never make a good trial lawyer, because I'm no orator. Perhaps I might knock the jury down, but that's not the custom. I couldn't make a partisan lawyer, because I don't know how. What I would like to do, young lady, is to study the law, all the law, and be human."

"Well, aren't you human now?" she asked. "Seems to me you are, very."

"Yes, but much study of the law destroys that quality, they say, instead of developing it as it should. You see, I'd like to hear all sides. I'd like to have all the books and the human experience to show the way, and then go straight ahead."

"Oh, you'll go straight ahead. You can depend on that, Jim," she said, encouragingly.

"It seems to me our greatest danger is in making the law fit the needs of someone who has influence," he went on, as if he were thinking aloud. "Anyone who interprets it, without regard except for the law itself and its spirit, in a big thing or a little one, is doing a great service, and I would enjoy that. The best thing in the world is to get the good out of men for good ends."

"And Aunt Martha would stand just as good a

chance as Colonel Walker in your court?" she asked, in an effort after simple essentials.

"Yes, precisely, and then both would have respect for the law and they would know it was a thing impartial and impersonal. But here I am talking at great length. And the secret is, Two Braids, that I would like to be a judge some day. Do you think I'd look odd as a judge?"

"No. You'd be big and smiling and they'd all listen—my, yes!"

"And," he declared, absently, with sudden vigor, "I am going to know the law, even if I'm poor all my life!"

"Of course you will. You'll win, Jim! You will be justice tempered with mercy—that's from Shakespeare, isn't it?" she exclaimed. "And there's something about strained in it—oh, now I *am* all mixed up!"

"'The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes,'" he quoted, softly.

"Yes, that's the one. Then, when you're a judge we'll have to say, 'Good-morning, Judge!' and 'Did you sleep well, Judge?' and 'Will you have another piece of pie, Judge?' Wouldn't that sound funny! And judges could not wash dishes and they could not climb cherry-trees. Oh, now I know! Portia said that poetry. If I'm Portia, will you decide in my favor?" she asked.

"Yes. I'll put you beside me on the bench.

You'd be the one person who would have a pull with the court. Now, what I have told you is a college man's vagaries. Many seniors want to reform the world at twenty-two and are working hard in an unreformed world at thirty-two to pay their bills."

"But you will be a judge—you must—and I'll be Portia—unless Portia has to know too much algebra."

"That's a bargain, or part of what we will call our bargain, just between you and me. We are always to be comrades and share each other's secrets."

"Always! Cross my heart, hope to——"

"Portia did not have a ruff, but Elizabeth did," he said, playfully wrapping her long braids around her neck; "but Elizabeth's was false and yours is real."

"I promise!" she repeated, drowsily. "And I hope there won't be any more splintered lightning soon, and I—I love you very much."

"Firefly time, I think," he said, and carried her to her room door. "It's a bargain and we'll share our secrets forever."

"Sh-h! Forever!" she answered. "Sh-h!" She was awake enough to recall that this was a mysterious, stealthy occasion.

VII

KNOCKING MR. HOBBER DOWN

SINCE the distressing news from the West, Hiram Hobber never could sleep a wink after cockcrow. He always awoke with a choking sensation and a desire to choke Mr. Jones. The longer he lay in bed the greater the desire, which was without moral cause, as he knew. Mr. Jones had not asked him to "come in." In fact, at one time Mr. Hobber had been worried lest there would not be room for him in the mining deal. Thanks to this new habit of early rising he was up when the Big Fellow called.

He had almost as varied interests as Colonel Walker, whom he circumspectly admired: a flour and feed business with an average of three customers a week, a fire insurance agency, and he loaned a little money on his own account and more on that of others. Being Justice of the Peace, unlike Colonel Walker he did not have to corrupt the judiciary.

The Justice rather liked working in the garden, but he hated to split wood. A big pile in the yard had been on his conscience for a week, Mrs. Hobber's nagging having kept the conscience sad com-

pany. This morning he had escaped on the plea that he must post up his books, in which he was occupied as early as seven A.M., with his ledger on his lap and his feet on the desk, while he looked out of the window.

“ It’s that Harden boy! ” he exclaimed, as he saw the suppliant approach, and his succeeding thoughts may as well be put in quotations: “ Big lummo! Away to college while his folks are living on crumbs—don’t know what the world’s coming to! Hope he’ll see the gate. Looks as if ’twould be all the same to him, the way he swings ’long, if he walked right through the fence. Comin’ to see ’bout that *entrest*! Well, I guess if his old mother can’t persuade me, he can’t. Not a minute over the thirtieth—not a minute. I’m a good business man, but I ain’t stubborn enough ”—when stubbornness was his main characteristic. “ Laughing, cheerful-looking, like he always was,” Mr. Hobber could not fail to observe, as the Big Fellow entered.

“ Mornin’, young man, mornin’! How’s your mother and your aunt? Well, eh? Glad to hear it. And how’s little Ellen? ”

Mr. Hobber had often observed that before Colonel Walker refused a man anything he told an affable story. He had heard several such on occasions, and always went away feeling pleased and honored. “ As Colonel Walker was saying to me ” was something in stock for conversation.

“ She’s smart as a weasel, is little Ellen. I ’member when she had her first penny to put in

the box. She held it up high so all could see, instead of hiding it. 'One for me, and one for Epaminanidad, who couldn't come,' she said so loud you could hear it all over church. I snickered right out—couldn't help it. 'I wanted him to see it wasn't a button,' she told her Aunt Julia."

Mr. Hobber snickered again, presumably at his way of telling the yarn, and the Big Fellow laughed generously, which made Mr. Hobber resolve that no one was going to come it over him by being good-natured.

"Now that I am back from school," the Big Fellow explained, "I'm going to look after my mother's affairs. How much do we owe you?"

Mr. Hobber had it on the tip of his tongue, but he took time to open the old safe and take out the books in order to appear businesslike.

"Six thousand, five hundred on the mortgage, an' *entrest*, an' accrued *entrest* on *entrest*, total of twelve hundred an' eighty dollars an' thirty-five cents up to June first, an' the place wuth about four thousand."

"If I paid you two hundred and fifty dollars on October first and kept up the interest, would you renew?"

"No, sir! My mind's made up. I've been fair as I could to a fellow church member, but business is business."

"You have. You have shown great generosity. I thank you for it at my first opportunity. I only learned the true state of affairs last night."

“ You did, eh? ” This was big news and news was scarce in Bolton. “ Well, by Jing, ain’t that like Mrs. Harden! ” Mr. Hobber ejaculated slowly.

“ Looking at it in a business way, if you get the two hundred and fifty on October first, and eventually all the money, won’t that be better than selling the place for four thousand? Let’s see, that’s a gain of three thousand seven hundred and eighty dollars.”

“ You got that two hundred and fifty in sight? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ How you going to get it? ”

“ Earn it.”

“ Got a job in sight? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ School-teachin’ don’t pay. Plenty of ’em for thirty a month; three months, ninety dollars—and this is vacation time. What you think you can do? ”

“ Anything my brain or hand is capable of.”

“ I thought so! I thought so! ” Then Mr. Hobber snickered as if he had found something too good to keep. “ Anything—brain or hand, eh? Do you see that wood pile out there? ”

Indeed, Mr. Hobber was about to call a bluff.

“ Yes. Do you want it split? What will you give me? ” was the quick response.

“ Dollar and a half. It’s wuth it to see a college man split wood! By Jing, it is! ”

“ Dinner included? ”

“ Yes.”

The Big Fellow removed his coat and collar and tackled the job with a genuineness of enthusiasm and a precision of execution that promised to make the game worth the price of admission.

“ ’Tain’t a sledge hammer you’ve got! You’re cuttin’ right through the knots! ” called Mr. Hobber out of the window. “ If you spile that axe I’ll dock you half a dollar.”

“ Tools furnished! ” was the answer between the vigorous blows which Mrs. Hobber had heard. She came out on the back steps, hands upraised in disgust.

“ Hiram! ” she called. “ Air you hirin’ wood split when business is so dull? ”

But not a word from Hiram. She ran along the board walk to the office.

“ Hiram, air you? ”

“ Yes, Mary, I am. I just made up my mind that what with the crick in my back a-hurtin’ me the way it does, an’ loss of sleep, it was cheaper’n doctors’ bills.”

The “ crick in my back ” excuse was reserved for crises. If overdone it might lose value. Her only protest was to slam the door as she returned to the kitchen. The Big Fellow dropped his axe and followed her. When she reappeared his eye met hers with roguish and pleasant inquiry.

“ I expect it’s you I ought to ask. Do I get my dinner, Mrs. Hobber? ”

She had to laugh, though she did not feel a bit

like it, simply “ ’cause *his* laugh was certainly catchin’,” as she said afterward.

“ Yes, if Hiram told you so, you big——” she assented, without finishing the sentence.

He hoped she did not have “ big bluff ” in mind. That seemed hardly fair to a man splitting wood on a hot June day.

Mrs. Hobber was nearsighted and the connection of young Harden with a day’s odd job was a wide one for her imagination. When she found who he was—and it was on account of not having her glasses, as she explained, that she had not recognized him—she had him in to dinner at the first table like real company.

“ We hope you don’t contemplate movin’ away from Bolton? ” she suggested, unable to avoid this coming sensation of the town not yet circulated.

“ Oh, no! ” said the Big Fellow. “ We’re going to stay in the old place. I’m going to arrange that with Mr. Hobber.”

Mrs. Hobber, aghast, caught Mr. Hobber’s eye.

“ No, he ain’t! ” Mr. Hobber declared, definitely.

The Big Fellow smiled at Mr. Hobber in surprise and continued to be amiable through the meal. By four o’clock, his hands blistered and the back of his neck sunburned, but little fatigued, his task was finished. Mr. Hobber had the dollar and a half in fifty-cent pieces ready.

“ Keep it on account,” said the creditor. “ That leaves two hundred and forty-eight dollars and fifty cents to be paid by October first.”

“ There ain’t any sech agreement! ” snapped Mr. Hobber.

The Big Fellow seemed to think that this was not a matter to argue at present, for he sat down at Mr. Hobber’s desk and asked for a couple of sheets of paper, and the Justice of the Peace indicated a pigeonhole where he kept his foolscap.

“ W-what are you going to do? ” he asked.

“ It will take only a few minutes,” the Big Fellow rejoined, reassuringly.

Mr. Hobber was dumbstruck and curious. He had nothing to do but submit. Using the wooden rule the Big Fellow tore off a strip the breadth of a check and in one corner Mr. Hobber saw him write \$248.50 and in the other the date. Then Mr. Hobber told himself that his mind was made up. Nothing could shake it and he ought not to be spying on a neighbor who had borrowed his desk for a minute. So he looked out of the window at the pile of split wood and began talking unconsciously.

“ Three cords in seven hours! That’s perty fast, Mr. Harden, perty fast! Took some athletics at college, I guess. Did you wear one of them sweaters with a letter on it? ”—which he imagined was in the Colonel’s best style of affability.

“ Yes, Mr. Hobber,” and a laugh was the only response from the Big Fellow, who had scarcely heard him.

Mr. Hobber looked the figure up and down, from the broad forehead to the chair bottom where the

pillar was solidly based. Scratch, scratch, the fingers, almost imperceptibly moving, drove the pen. If the Big Fellow had leaned over the blotter and written excitedly he would not have been so peculiarly disconcerting to Mr. Hobber. It looked as if he were capable either of writing or splitting wood right through eternity. The narrow sheet was signed and finished and laid to one side. Mr. Hobber saw that the other began with "This agreement." Half-way down the page the Big Fellow broke the last of solid ranks of lines and below it, without a flourish but in the same small, copperplate hand, wrote "James Harden," blotting the whole with a deliberation that heightened the spectator's nervousness. Then that human pillar rose and concentrated its attention on Mr. Hobber.

"Now, sir," the Big Fellow informed him, "youth and determination represent capital and an investment worth the staking of three months' interest for a gain of over three thousand dollars. You have my note of hand to pay you two hundred and forty-eight dollars and fifty cents, due on October first, which you can always hold against me. This agreement covers the arrangement for renewal of the mortgage if the money is paid."

There was a finality in the Big Fellow's manner. It seemed useless to argue with him.

"Well," said Mr. Hobber, "well—let me see the agreement." He was curious.

"Yes, certainly, you sign right there." Big pointed to the place encouragingly.

"Why don't you try bein' a book agent?" Mr. Hobber grumbled, as he read the correct and clear phrasing.

"I shan't forget your liberality in this," the Big Fellow proceeded. "I thank you for my mother and myself."

Then Mr. Hobber did realize that the Big Fellow had won.

"Well, I hope I've got a heart, young man, I hope I have," Mr. Hobber congratulated himself. "Now you'll have to make another copy of this. You'll want one yourself."

"No, Mr. Hobber. When you've waited for us all these years your word is enough."

"Well—I——" Mr. Hobber was a "black and white" man. He wanted everything "down in writin'" so there'd be no gettin' 'round it." This confidence in him inspired confidence. His blood flowed faster. And what was it that the Big Fellow had told Miss Two Braids about getting the good out of men for good ends? Mr. Hobber tore up the note and the agreement.

"An' your word is good enough for me," he said. "But, young man, if it ain't paid on the thirtieth it's the hammer. I'm older'n you are, an' let me tell you if it ain't paid you're a worse loser than I am. Your character will be a durn poor investment thereafter. Good luck to ye!"

"Oh, yes, you keep the dollar and a half!" the wood chopper protested merrily, when it was offered again.

“ Whatever you do don’t ever speculate—in mines,” Mr. Hobber called to him from the doorway. “ Magnetism, I guess,” was his final explanation of the day’s phenomenon. “ That boy ought to go into politics.”

VIII

TWO LITTLE PRAYERS

IT'S ours! We stay!" he shouted from the gate on his return from Mr. Hobber's.

"Ours! We stay!" Miss Two Braids cried, running to meet him. "Oh, I knew you'd do it, Jim!"

The two old ladies, from the reaction of that brave effort they had made to be philosophical over the loss of the old place, broke into tears which, when they stopped flowing, made their eyes the brighter with happiness.

"We'll have two kinds of preserves for supper," declared Miss Two Braids, "and let you fill the sugar bowl with tea, and you can wear my long-stringed apron, Mister Ninety in Calculus."

According to Big's own easy story of the affair, Hiram was the most reasonable of men, who had made the concession entirely on Madame Mother's account as soon as he knew that the bookish son was willing to work.

"You squeezed him against the wall, and when he said he would be good you let him go, I know," said Miss Two Braids, who held a different view.

Madame Mother thought that her hero, after his triumph, would remain a few days at home. It never occurred to her that he would depart immediately, as he must, he knew, if he were to earn the two hundred and forty-eight dollars and fifty cents by October first.

Was it a sense of incapability of explaining his impatience? Was it a scarcely defined wish to avoid the emotion of a long-drawn farewell that made him keep his plan to start for the city at once from both mother and aunt? Or, more likely, was it the sentimental wish that his good-by glimpse of them should be as they ascended the stairs, candles in hand, that evening? Yet he did tell his new partner in all secrets that he was off at four the next morning.

“I feel as I did before a football game began,” he explained. “I want to be at it and I’ve no time to lose. I’ll get a cup of coffee at Stottstown while the train waits. No one need get up.”

But she was standing at the stairs’ head with a shawl thrown over her shoulders when he came out of his room. In the break of dawn he saw her eyes glistening. He felt her hand, warm and soft, in his.

“Portia believes in you,” she said. “You’ll win.”

“That’s half,” he answered.

“And, Jim, I want to speak to you about the prayers. We always mention you regularly in family prayers, of course. But family prayers seem so professional.”

“ Ellen! ” he whispered, in Aunt Julia’s best manner.

“ And, Jim, I just want to tell you I’m going to say two little prayers all by myself every night—little prayers without the usual what you call formalities, little prayers that mean all my heart. First, it’ll be just for you, and next that the love of the law will never make you forget love of your Two Braids.”

He was always to remember that speech. It had a potent influence in his life, like Mr. Hober’s remark about proving his character by paying that two hundred and forty-eight dollars and fifty cents on time. She was always to remember it, too, but through what varying emotions!

“ And you’ll never forget to love me, Two Braids? ” which she was to remember, also. “ And I have a plan. You must always go for the mail; or, if you can’t, strike a bargain with Pam when he goes. This is to be a real conspiracy.”

“ Sh-h! ” said Miss Two Braids, all interest, but aware that conspiracies ought to be whispered.

“ I’ll write you the real truth always in letters especially addressed to you, because you will believe that everything is coming out all right. The real truth will be funny sometimes, too, I expect. But I’m going to write Madame Mother cheerful letters.”

“ M-m-m! Professionally cheerful letters, like the family prayers are professionally solemn.”

“ You’re to help by keeping her in good spirits. Is that agreed? ”

“ M-m-m! I’ll write often. Good-by, Jim—and, Jim, remember when the lightning splinters it doesn’t strike. It only makes you tingle. And remember I’m a little girl full of tingles in this old house all alone with two old ladies, and sometimes I—but you’ll win—you’ll win!” were her last words following him down the stairs.

Whose was this figure that the Big Fellow saw from the porch, waiting with one black hand on the dew-sprinkled white gate? There was no mistaking Epaminanidad’s identity.

“ Lemme carry yo’ bag, Mistah Jim. Yissah, don’ yo’ worry. Yo’ won’ miss yo’ train. I kin keep up. Thought yo’d get away ’thout Pam knowin’ it, didn’ you’? Couldn’ fool me! I had ’spishuns, an’ ’spishuns allus keep me ’wake. I seen yo’ candlelight an’ I jes’ stockin’-footed it downstairs an’ there I waited.”

Big was immeasurably pleased to know that one who did not fear to despise the Greeks should remember him in this way. A robin ran along beside them and they saw him get the early worm, which augured well for a giant who had risen early to make a start in the world. Youth and enterprise and hope were in the fresh morning air.

“ Pam, I’ve got an engagement with the city,” said Youth. “ The city doesn’t know it yet, but

somebody in the city will about four this afternoon. I'll not be disappointed if the Mayor and a band are not at the station. And, Pam, you're to help the folks at home all you can."

"Yissah. I 'spect to get mah mind a-tuned up all c'rect an' regain confidence again so dey'll lemme wash de dishes. An', Mistah Jim, I t'ink soon's yo' has a few dollahs to spare as how it's bettah to buy a cow fust an' let de lawn mowah wait.

"Ise been t'inkin' 'bout dat an' I'll 'splain. A lawn mowah on'y eats grass an' don' give no milk, an' while a lawn mowah's mo' stylish 'n a cow it ain't so reas'nable nor so practicable—not fo' us. An' I don' b'lieve yo' know it, but Ise got quite a business haid, I has. I reckon I kin sell milk nuff to pay fo' dat cow, yissah, I kin, jes' as easy, jes' as easy. Ise gwine to call her Eliz-a-buth, jes' like de odder, on'y stid o' Betty Ise gwine to call her Liz fo' short, out o' 'spect to Betty an' fo' diffrence's sake."

In less than three days after Willy Sweetser had interrupted him at packing, the Big Fellow had been home and departed. This time he was no self-borne caravan, but light artillery, with one small valise, equipped for the charge.

Many journeys he was to make: To Washington, with Willy Sweetser's passionate telegrams following; to the old front porch in Bolton, to be told where the path of duty lay; across distant seas at the call of Miss Destiny; through the

jungle in the night in the name of a friend and a policy; and home again, when he was to know that honors of state are empty until a great thing comes true to a man whose hair is turning gray. But first to the first journey.

IX

THAT PLUS SIGN

HAVE you ever asked yourself how you would earn a living if you should alight at the Union Station of a large city without friends or money or trade or profession? Try the experience some time! For bad cases of self-esteem it has remarkable curative properties. But first be sure that your soles are thick.

An A.B. from a university may prove to be of less practical value, as well it ought in many instances, than a membership card of good standing in the Lathers' Union. You will find how helpless most of us are when we think we are quite independent; how, in our most extravagant moments of fancied courage and self-sufficiency, we still cling to a connection with a bank account or with somebody who has one.

To return to first principles, what is a living? The thing that makes physical existence possible, you may say. An easy definition, susceptible of any interpretation, is that it is something relative which you must have in order to exist according to your personal idea of existence. To Homer it was a blanket, a handful of olives, a crust, and a place by the wayside. To a million-

aire it is a private car, servants, and worries. In our northern climate Homer would either have had to live at a Mills Hotel or tramp to California before he could gain the capital which would enable him to burst into song.

In the same way, before he could be either as good or as wise as the books he had been studying, the Big Fellow must have food and shelter. So he left the books at home in the unopened soap and catsup boxes. How much easier it would have been for him if he had begun life as an office boy at ten! Then failure to get a job promptly when suddenly cast on his own resources at twenty-two would have interested no one; for if anybody ought to know how to get a job, society would say, it should be a former office boy with twelve years' knowledge of the game to his credit.

At alumni banquets speakers are ever declaring that in the course of a decade or so the graduate overtakes and passes in the race for success the man who never went to college. A decade was not in the vocabulary of Jim Harden, of '88, who had to earn two hundred and forty-eight dollars and fifty cents, plus his bed and board, in three months. One plus sign can make one month a thousand and all alumni orations ridiculous.

This amount he might have borrowed from college friends in small sums, with an increase of bookkeeping and temporary peace of mind. But that did not occur to him. He had set himself a "stent," as Hiram Hobber would have it; and he was a big, stubborn, good-natured, absent-

mined, bookish kind of a man, as Mrs. Billings could have told you, who had less than five dollars in his pocket when he passed out of the station into a city where he literally had no friend, unless Colonel Walker counted as one.

He lacked any definite idea as to what he was going to do except to find work, which, to return to Mrs. Billings, only went to prove what an impractical fool of an oil-burner he was, who ought never to have been allowed out of her sight; and this being true, why, it only makes that plus sign as big as the hands of a cathedral clock, not to say that it justified Mrs. Hobber in calling Hiram an "old softy."

But there is an occupation without caste, its tenets dictated by no professional school or trade-union stamp, which draws penniless graduates into its ruck of day-by-day battle for quick rewards in the headlines of to-morrow. The Big Fellow had heard that editors would give a man a trial with a prospector's hope of discovering someone with the trick of style or of playing up an event that would make the public read.

Leaving his valise in a twenty-five-cent room, he started in to make the round of the newspapers. It was a study in office boys who came out to say that the city editor was busy—sallow office boys, chubby office boys, simply saucy office boys. On each occasion he went past the plate-glass window of the mighty cashier's stall, the "Want" and "Information" desks of the business office, up a flight of rickety stairs out of that

atmosphere of thrift into a dingy anteroom, and here, through the inner door when it was opened, he saw, in the haze of tobacco smoke, cartoons and colored prints and photographs pasted on the walls and men in shirt-sleeves at desks.

Had he been worldly wise he would have asked the city editor's name of "Information." Then he would have entered the editorial rooms as if he belonged there and asked the first reporter, "Which is Mr. So-and-So?" and the reporter would have nodded toward one of the cluster of desks.

He had tried five of the six papers in the town. The sixth was *The Beacon*. Here an unusual type of office boy appeared. He was not chewing gum. He was unusual, too, in that he looked the Big Fellow directly in the eye and said: "Yes, sir. What is it?" His spectacles and his bulging forehead made him seem elfish and old-mannish, and his legs inside the carefully patched stockings were distressingly thin.

"I am looking for work," said the Big Fellow. He always began that way. It exactly expressed his desire. But it was a bad way, though he spoke as if the request were too reasonable to be denied. "I'd like to see the city editor," he added.

"Yes, sir."

The spectacled boy disappeared with his name, which might as well have been John Jones, and the Big Fellow sat down on a green-painted deal bench and wondered why this anteroom enjoyed the luxury of a relic still recognizable as a chair,

an whose broken seat of cane had been re-enforced
New by piling in many Sunday editions. His musing
an hypothesis was that it was a derelict drifted out
of the editorial rooms to this beach before breaking up, which is right as far as anybody knows. The spectacled boy was back quicker than the other boys. He had not stopped on the way to make a paper wad or give a wire file a whirl on its standard.

“ Mr. Booth is very sorry, sir, but he can’t take anybody on just at present,” was the respectful and considerate report.

“ Did he really say he was very sorry? ” asked the Big Fellow, in human curiosity. The answer he had anticipated. There was no disappointment in that.

“ No, sir, he didn’t. I guess he is, though, when he isn’t too busy. Anyway, I always say it that way, ’cause—’cause I kind of like to make it easier, there’s so many comes in.”

The Big Fellow broke into a laugh, partly over this old, young, sage boy and partly over his own ridiculous position. A laugh always helped him when he was blue. Kiddy Witherbee dropped back a step, as startled as if a peaceable mountain in a serene landscape had suddenly burst forth in fireworks.

“ My! You are big—phew! ” gasped Kiddy. “ I wonder if I’ll ever be half so big. Mother says it’s because I work nights, but you have to work somewhere when times are hard, don’t you? Say, I’m going in and speak to Mr. Booth again.

I didn't tell him how big you was." At the door, squinting through his glasses with a wise shake of his head, he added: " Say, if you would laugh that way to Mr. Booth you'd attract attention and he might take you on. I'd like to see a man who can laugh like you can in this office. It's not the size of the laugh so much as the happy ring in it that I think is just great. Come on in! I'll stand for that, myself."

" I can't promise about the laugh. That comes only with inspiration, my boy," said the Big Fellow. " I can't do it to order, you see, like an actor."

Kiddy Witherbee led the way into the room where some of the reporters were waiting on their " first stories " of the day and others were idling. They looked at the Big Fellow and guessed " college " with their quick intuition, and one, a college man, said, in that day of heavy center rushes: " What a center rush! "

" I think he is a good one, Mr. Booth. Look how big he is, and my! but his laugh makes you feel rested! " Kiddy whispered in the city editor's ear.

As he bent over a piece of flimsy, the only visible portions of Mr. Booth's personality were a blue-striped shirt with the sleeves rolled up, a corncob pipe, a piece of unshaven chin, a green eye-shade under a touseled thatch of hair in close proximity to an electric-light bulb, while his fingers drove a blue pencil in a race against time with swift left-to-right slides through the lines

of lean, telegraphese chirography. For a second the pencil would pause in consideration. Then it would write a few words making a connection in sense across a chasm between two sentences whose life he had spared, or it would eliminate a prolix relative clause with as little mercy as King Richard III. disposed of his princely relatives in the play.

“ Here, Jersey, I guess that’s good for half a head,” he said, with a final flourish, as he passed it to a man at a neighboring desk. “ What papers have you been on? ” he asked the Big Fellow, as he seized another piece of copy.

This was the point for the Big Fellow to make his play; it was exactly the place where Kiddy wanted the laugh. He did not dare speak his wish, but he did nudge his candidate in the leg, which seemed such an enormous, hard leg to him, and further excited his admiration. If the Big Fellow understood, he failed to act on the hint.

“ I’m just out of college two days ago. I wrote college affairs for the *New York Record* and the *Boston Onlooker*,” he answered, simply.

“ Those obits! ” mused the city editor.

“ I beg pardon! Those what? ” asked the Big Fellow. He was interested. Without being asked he seated himself on a vacant chair beside Mr. Booth.

“ Oh, I called them obits because they never print any news. I’m sorry, but we’re not taking on any more men now ”—and he returned to the charge with the blue pencil.

When he had finished with that particular piece of flimsy, an island of four lines in the center of a gridiron field remained. Rereading them, he seemed to be struck with wonder at how they had escaped. He crumpled the "story" in a wad and threw it into the general waste basket, which was the floor.

"I object to petrified misinformation from the dark ages of last Monday!" he muttered. Then he glanced up.

The Big Fellow was still seated, calm as Buddha. He looked as if he were going to stay forever.

"You surprise me!" he remarked. "I didn't know before that the *Record* never printed any news. They wrote me in their instructions that that was what they wanted me to look after."

For the first time Mr. Booth scrutinized the Big Fellow up and down. He grinned and put out his hand for a typewritten slip, which he ran through as he whirled around in his chair.

"Now, if you would give me a trial," suggested the Big Fellow, amiably; and, though he did not say so, he appeared to be thinking: "Why, I'll not sit here the whole evening unoccupied when you're too busy to talk to me."

The city editor made no answer, unless he considered talking about another incident to be in the nature of one.

"Here's a tip with about one chance in a thousand of not being a fake. According to this, some of the water rats down on the river front have

organized a Black Hand gang and they're serving notice on the unpopular boys. They pushed little Eddy Smith off a pier last night and drowned him. Spader!"

"Spader's at the City Hall, sir," said Kiddy Witherbee, keeper of the roll.

There was the Big Fellow, though he had been told that no new men were wanted, still seated and smiling. It looked as if the only way to get him started was to send for the safe-moving gang.

"Everybody that's any good on that kind of a story's out," Booth remarked. "You might try this, if you like, Mr. Harden. It will show what you can do, and then, if there is an opening——"

"I'll do my best!" was the grateful answer.

"Have him pushed if you can. It's more interesting than if he fell," Kiddy whispered, as the Big Fellow went out.

But Eddy Smith had not been pushed. He had fallen. It happened that some of his playmates had been overheard saying that he was "N.G." and ought to be ducked. If this part had been "played up," results for the Big Fellow might have been different.

It was after eight when he returned. Industiously he wrote for an hour, while Kiddy Witherbee, a self-appointed, elfish satellite of bigness, sat on the edge of the desk between errands. All the facts were fully and faithfully set down. Hopefully, the neophyte laid the finished copy on the city editor's desk and looked in vain for any

sign in the touseled hair and green eye-shade while the mighty man read it through.

“ Mr. Harden,” was the verdict, in a kindlier tone than Bcoth had used before, “ looking at it from the newspaper viewpoint, a great many little boys are drowned every year. The first one in May may be worth a head, but by the last week in June it’s an old story. There wasn’t anything particularly striking about the way Eddy went. What you have written is a beautiful piece of evidence. It covers the whole case. It reads like the Supreme Court. Here, Thompson, make two sticks of this. Begin with ‘ He ought to be drowned.’ ”

“ Ducked! ” put in the Big Fellow, honestly.

“ Drowned is more interesting, but, as you say, ‘ ducked ’ is right, Mr. Harden. Begin it, Thompson, “ He ought to be ducked,” said the gang of boys with whom Eddy Smith played, and that night little Eddy Smith was dead.’ Hang the whole story on that idea, Thompson—and I’m afraid, Mr. Harden, to be honest with you, that you’ll have to learn a good deal before you’ll make a newspaper man.”

“ Yes,” the Big Fellow assented, “ I guess I’m more in the draught-horse line;” and there he had seated himself again as if he proposed to begin the subject afresh. “ Now, don’t you need a man that can get facts and write them out in full? ”

“ Oh, yes. Unfortunately, just now, as I said, we’re full up. If you’d like to drop in evenings

and ask I might give you something in—in your line. But don't base any hopes on that. Get another berth if you can. This would be only an occasional dollar assignment."

Booth, who had never experienced such a feeling before, felt a little ashamed to mention so small a sum as one dollar to such a big man.

"Anyway, it's one hundred cents" (which sounded larger). "Glad to have met you, Mr. Harden."

"You come and keep coming," whispered Kiddy Witherbee, at the door. "I'll keep an eye out for you. I'll be what they call a friend at court."

An occasional dollar would never do. The Big Fellow faced the truth unflinchingly at once. There was some kind of pony-trick business in newspaper work for which a draught horse was too stupid. As he went down the stairs to the business office he thought of the "Help Wanted" advertisements. Why not try them? he asked himself, and then he noted some other members of the army of unemployed painfully looking over the files. They were bloodless men in frayed coats and soiled white collars, bearing the scars which the battle of life leaves in every line of the face. He turned away from them, not in repugnance, but with the grateful thought that he possessed something that they lacked. He had physical strength. That he could capitalize, if not knowledge of the Roman law. His duty was

not to wait for work, but to get work promptly at anything.

From the door of *The Beacon* office he saw down the street, under the flare of gas torches, a score or more of laborers tearing up the pavement for a new trolley line. He felt of his biceps as he walked toward them. All his confidence returned. An unshaven man standing on a pile of earth, his hands in his pockets, watching the gang, was evidently the city editor of this establishment.

"I'm looking for work," the Big Fellow said. "Is there any chance for me to get a job?"

The section boss scowled at first. Usually men in white collars did not have the requisite stamina. When his sharp eye saw the form that went with this white collar he ejaculated:

"God, yes!"

"Do I apply to you?"

"No. Apply at Number 223 East First Street for the day gang. Dollar and a half a day and you can start in the morning, if you want to."

Evidently the public paid the muscles that built a trolley line as liberally as it paid the brains that amused it on the way home.

"Two Braids will see the sport of this," he said.

In good humor with himself, he smiled appreciatively over the horror of Madame Mother and Aunt Julia if they should hear what he was going to do. He had no thought of writing to them about it, you may be sure. Had he not already formed a connection with a newspaper the first

day of his arrival? And wasn't the way already clearing itself for him to begin the law when the summer was over? For, of course, he would not begin until autumn, and meanwhile he was going to take plenty of exercise to keep in good physical trim. So, at least, he wished two old ladies to see his situation, in his first "professionally cheerful" letter home.

X

WITH THE MIXED GANG

WHILE story-tellers write of the romance of the Foreign Legion, in which spend-thrift and spend-rift of many tongues serve France in the safely incognito land of the Moroccan frontier, we should not overlook the foreign legions of our own country, known under a different and less military name, which uphold the dignity of labor through no choice of their own. Farther down the street was a pure legion, all Italians. Theirs was too modern a phase of Roman colonization to concern *The International Law Review* when it chose a subject for a prize essay.

It was the "mixed gang," under Terence McPhane as foreman, to which Mr. Ninety in Calculus, having to supply his own pick and shovel, was assigned. A few of his co-laborers were American born, sinewy and taciturn except for an occasional cynicism over their lot, and more were Huns. Three were negroes and the small, middle-aged man next to him was Irish, and by name Pete Maloney.

"Shure, I've seen dudes afore," said Pete, "an' I've no prejudices agin any man that's

afther an honest day's wur-rk. It's me that's tellin' ye if ye'll pick the blisters under the edge it's throe they'll smart some, but it's betther than losin' all the skin."

"The skin's gone already," affirmed the Big Fellow, and grabbed his shovel again. He had dropped it mechanically to have a look at those red, bleeding palms and at his broken nails.

"Better cut the nails clean," suggested Foreman Terence. "Got a knife? No? Here's one!"

The Big Fellow had a rest while he pared off the splinters to the quick.

"What brought ye here, me b'y?" asked Pete, looking up through his grizzly eyebrows.

"I needed money," answered the Big Fellow, slyly. "What brought you?"

"Immigrashun an' me natchral charakter, me havin' the sand but not the girth fer the foorce. That's all. It's as much as ye give. An' if ye're thinkin' I'm goin' to make all the conversation it's yersilf that's mistaken."

In a few sentences Pete had made himself admirable and likable, and the Big Fellow now laughed out of the delight of camaraderie.

"Laugh that way as often as ye like. Ye're all right," said Pete. "I'll put ye onto all the fine p'int's of the thrade, 'n' I might remind ye to stahrt with that ye're doin' two min's wur-rk."

The Big Fellow was quite unconscious of this. He tossed paving-stones out to one side when

that was the thing and dug or shoveled when that was, with the energy of one after a record.

“Ye’re all right, but ye want to git a pair of overalls an’ come in yer undershir-rt t’-morrer. Ye’re as conspicuous as the giniral l’adin’ the p’rade.”

Before the day was over he had an illustration of the misfortune of a white shirt, tan shoes, and gray trousers for his present occupation. They singled him out to an elderly, slight, sharp-faced man driving in a buggy with a young man at his side. The foreman had responded at the first sight of this gentleman and was standing with one hand on the tire of the wheel, speaking to the president of the company, when the recruit happened to look up and straight into Colonel Walker’s bright eye.

“Morning!” said the Colonel, grinning.

“Good-morning to you, Colonel Walker,” he answered. “A little muggy, but fine growing weather. Good-morning, Ned!”

“Changed your mind, did you?” whinnied the Colonel. “Working for me after all, eh? This is my trolley line.”

“Not in a private capacity,” answered the Big Fellow, laughing. “It’s a public utility and I have no contract for a term of years.”

“Utility, eh? I expect it to be pretty useful to me. How is he doing?” (This to Terence.)

“First-rate man, sir,” said Terence.

“Hands pretty sore, Mr. Harden?” pursued the Colonel.

“ Pretty, yes. Raw and hammy. But that will mend and it’s a good work, isn’t it, Colonel, improving our transit facilities? ”

This shot the Colonel, with his keen sense of humor, must have appreciated. If he had anything to say in response, however, he was not given an opportunity. Dropping his shovel with a ring as the handle struck a paving-block, Pete Maloney broke into a harangue:

“ It’s you that’s Colonel Walker, is it? It’s long I’ve been wantin’ to look at ye, ye ol’ rapscallion! I’ve niver bowed the knee to a landlord in Ireland an’ it’s not me that’s goin’ to bow it now fer tin damned jobs at a dollar an’ a half a day. An’ it’s me that’s tellin’ ye fer yer own good that if ye don’t make transfers wid the Eighth Sthreet line to Shantytown on the East Side, the place yer bound to go to, as I see be the look o’ yer face, ain’t half hot enough fer ye! ”

“ Send that man away! ” Ned Walker said, hotly.

But his father put his hand on the son’s arm with a “ Tut! ” and his whinnying laugh.

“ You’ve a lot to learn, Ned, ” he told his son.

“ An’ shure I said it an’ shure I sthand by it! ” repeated Pete.

“ What kind of a man is he? ” asked the Colonel of the foreman.

“ First-rate worker. ”

“ And what’s his name? ”

The Colonel never allowed sentiment to interfere with business. This was not a matter of cal-

culuation with him. It was habit. Only a man of equal strength ever made him really lose his temper.

“Those are your political opinions, Mr. Maloney, I see,” said the Colonel. “I’m trying to develop this city and I must finish this trolley line by October first. My heart is with the poor people of the East Side. I’ll give transfers if it won’t bankrupt the Consolidated. I like a candid man, Mr. Maloney;” the Colonel smiled over his joke.

“Shure all that slathering ’ll not get a sip o’ wather fer ye down below!” retorted Pete.

Meanwhile, of all the gang only the Big Fellow was at work. The rest were spell-bound spectators. Critically the Colonel scrutinized him as he plied his pick with powerful swings.

“Come, look here, Harden!” said Ned. “It’s not right to see you doing this. Let us give you something else. There’ll be no obligations.”

Caste was strong in Ned Walker and manifest in the finely chiseled lines of a handsome face that at times seemed a little supercilious and at times pleasing and fickle. Socially it was repugnant to him to see a classmate in the ranks of day laborers, beside negroes.

“Thanks, Ned,” the Big Fellow returned. “I came to town without any money and concluded to make my own way. It’s just as good exercise as football. You aren’t in any fear of being jumped on if you break training and it won’t make my shoulders slope any worse.”

“Oh, very well,” Ned answered, gingerly.

Who else but Harden would think of such a thing?

"It isn't too late. I'll make you that offer for the last time," the Colonel said, as he lifted his reins.

"No. I'll stick to this. It's a good post-graduate course in the humanities for a man who has been living among books and in the clouds."

"Ne-eh!" the Colonel whinnied. "Giddap!"

"Good-morning, Ned!" the Big Fellow called.

"Good-morning, Harden!" Ned answered.

The foreman followed the buggy to know if there were any special directions about Harden, and the Colonel said, "None."

"It's caddish, nothing less. He's turning Socialist or something," Ned remarked to his father, as they turned into a cross-street to escape the broken paving.

"No! No Socialist that's a college graduate takes hold as a day laborer. No! Damn him—no, I say, Ned"—and the old financier was silent for a space. "Ned, in a week the foreman and all the dagos and the coons will be thinking what a fine fellow he is. He's a natural politician."

This was a mistake. In a week they were trying to break the head of the new recruit.

"Ye're Irish ye're that contrairy, an' God bliss ye!" said Pete. "Ye only come to the city yis-tiddy? An' where did ye sthop? At one o' thim lodgin'-houses, ye say, where ye lape through

the dure onto the bid an' give up yer quart o' blood overnight? Shure, it's the likes of yer sunny silf the Missus an' me have been lookin' fer fer a boarder. Ye'll like the childher. They're Irish. Ye can't help it. It's a fine counthry estate we have."

Far out on the hills on the edge of the city an old mansion had been partly torn down when a certain real estate and building deal fell through. The Maloneys moved into the other half and hung out their washing from ropes attached to the framework which lay bare among the plastering. When the owner came, said Pete:

"Shure, ye'll be aisy with us that's guardin' yer property an' kapin' yer inimies from dumpin' ashes an' garbage."

"How much a month ought I to charge you?"

"If I had to pay rint how'd I ever support the childher? Look at 'em! Ain't they the bright ones? Tim's goin' to be a praste—an' me on a dollar an' a half a day!"

So the owner patted Tim on the head and forgot to send in a bill.

Mrs. Maloney hung the old porch with curtains, and in this the Big Fellow camped in the warm months. Around a high city hydrant for the street sprinklers the boys of the neighborhood had built an enclosure and, the alderman from Shantytown being of the majority, they had a shower, under which every night, when he came home sweaty and sticky with the dirt in which he had been delving, the Big Fellow stood for a minute

before he sat down to the evening meal with Pete and the Missus and the children.

"Shure, an' we're the rale aristocracy, we are," in the words of the host, "an' haven't we the stahr boarder?"

Later in the evening Big would usually go to the office of *The Beacon*, where he would wait hopefully—"like an elephant for a peanut," said one of the reporters—for a dollar assignment, and if it was not forthcoming he would write a letter on *The Beacon's* letterhead to Madame Mother, but to Miss Two Braids on the regular copy paper.

"Oh, I cried for shame," Miss Two Braids wrote, "when I read what you were doing. I was so angry I beat the pillow. It's not right, I said, and I wish you had just taken Colonel Walker's offer. Our family's too stubborn. But the next morning I thought of Pete Maloney and fancied I could see him and his little pipe and twinkling eye, and I laughed because I knew you would want me to laugh over it, and because I knew you were happy and free or you would not write of everything in such a happy way, and because I know you'll win and study the law just the way you want to.

"If I only could look in and see you and the Missus and the children! Why is it so easy for the Irish to talk, Jim? Why is it you can't help liking them? . . .

"We let Pam wash the dishes now. He holds a

plate like it was an eggshell and he is so slow. He says he is ' 'sponsible ' and nothing is going to hurry him till he has won back his good name. Mr. Hobber wanted to buy our grass for hay. Pam wouldn't sell. He says he wants the hay for the new cow you are going to buy him next winter. We had to let him have his way; he is so contrary, and he can be contrary in such an amusing way. . . .

“ If you could have seen Aunt Martha when that five dollars you sent came! She cried over it. ‘ Julia,’ she said, ‘ he didn’t have to take it from Colonel Walker. He earned it with his own brain in the city where he went without a friend ’ ” (that brain was calloused beyond all danger of blisters by this time) “ ‘ and I’m going to send it right back.’

“ But then a bill for groceries came and she just couldn’t. Big brother, if you send money home how are you ever going to pay Mr. Hobber? There, that is practical! ” (So Jim thought. He had calculated to a nicety the family’s minimum needs, which he must assist, and that five dollars was a guarantee of his success to reassure their fears.) “ But you will do it, Jim.

“ Lovingly,

“ PORTIA.

“ P. S. Confidential: I am always going to sign myself Portia. Maybe it will make you a judge sooner. Our secret. Confidential ”—each “ confidential ” having four underscores.

THE LABORER'S HIRE

“**Y**E'RE wur-rkin' too har-rd!” said Pete Maloney.

“I can't help it,” said the “stahr boarder.”

“An' why can't ye?”

“I don't know. Original sin, maybe, Pete.”

Others did know. It was a characteristic. He put his energy into swinging the pick as prodigally as into his essay in the small hours of the morning.

“It ain't in rayson t' do three dollars' wur-rk fer that ol' rapscaillon whin ye git only a dollar an' a half,” Pete resumed. “Now, ye absint-moinded divil, whin ye see a dhrop of sweat spatter off the ind of yer nose on a pavin'-sthone, jist take it fer a warnin' of a curve an' crossin' ahead an' shlow down.”

If he did three dollars' worth of work, ought he not to have three dollars pay? That idea once germinated is likely to grow on anyone who is toiling with a July sun on the back of his head as he bends over the cobbles, with the rank-smelling dust of city pavements hot in his nostrils.

“ And why shouldn’t I get three, then? ” he asked Pete.

“ Say, if ye did ye’d have the whole gang on yer back like a lot o’ wildcats! ”

“ I don’t see any reason for that,” the Big Fellow pursued.

“ Thry an’ ye will. Rayson, me b’y, ain’t bor-rn in the gang. They wur-rk with their hands, not their heads. If they had the heads they wouldn’t be wur-rkin’ with their hands.”

“ I’ll think that over to-night,” Big concluded.

“ An’ what come out o’ yer thinkin’? ” Pete asked the next morning.

“ Two fifty a day. I’ll speak to McPhane,” was the answer.

“ It’s meself that will not miss that conversation,” said Pete, who was at the “ stahr boarder’s ” elbow when they arrived for their work, and Big went at once to the foreman with his candid question:

“ Do I do more work than the other men? ”

“ Gwan! ” said McPhane. “ It’s a hot day.”

“ Well, do I do two fifty’s worth compared to one fifty for the others? That’s a fair question.”

The grey eye that never laughed bored into Terence’s soft blue one for the truth; and an honest answer being directly demanded, Terence gave it.

“ Sure you do.”

“ Without trying to collect any back pay, I’d like two fifty in the future,” the Big Fellow returned, easily.

“ Oh, ye wouldn't collect any back pay, ye——” Terence began. It seemed to him that the Big Fellow, who had not moved an inch, was standing about a foot nearer.

“ This is a matter of simple principle, Mr. McPhane, simple honesty.”

“ I'll think it over,” said Terence. “ Take yer pick and get busy.”

Many kinds had been on the mixed gang in Terence's time, and the Big Fellow belonged to none of them, the shrewd foreman knew. Ordinarily, this problem could have been settled by telling the applicant to quit if he were not satisfied. The best way now was to shift responsibility and keep your own skirts clear. When the matter was taken to the superintendent he carried it higher up, and finally Colonel Walker himself was talking over the telephone from the Union Club to Terence, who was in Gus Berkhoover's saloon.

“ Wants two fifty a day, does he? Is he earning it? ” the Colonel asked.

“ Yes, sir. He does twice as much as most of the men and three times as much as some of the bums.”

“ Ne-eh! Well, why does he want it? ”

For the Colonel was interested. Anything about the Big Fellow seemed to have a hold on his imagination. The wonder of a young man who refused an offer from him was a solecism in his experience that he could not forget.

“ Why does anybody want more pay? ” Terence asked, laughing.

“ Ho-ho!—and Ned called him a Socialist,” thought the Colonel. “ Well, what if we should give it to him? ”

“ Why, it will be all right if we keep quiet. If the others find out, there’ll be hell to pay. They’d strike or make him give it up.”

“ Well, you pay it to him and let the other fellows know; d’ye get that? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

Terence thought he heard a throaty ejaculation like a neighing giggle as the Colonel hung up the receiver. It was not for him to question orders from the throne. He told the Big Fellow he was to get the two fifty.

“ An’ kape it quiet, Terence, or there’ll be a Donnybrook Fair,” said Pete Maloney, promptly.

“ If oratory would move dirt you’d tunnel mountains,” Terence answered.

“ Shure, but ye’d plug up the hole with yer assurance, ye loafer! ”

Terence grinned, for they were both Irish. At noontime, in duty bound, Terence passed the word. It traveled fast among the tired men lying on the walks in the shade of the buildings on that nerve-exciting, blistering day. In the business heart of the city, which was set in a basin among the hills, no breeze from the river penetrated more than the distance of a block.

All the thinking power that those weary men had left was their tempers. An unspoken rule

which bound them into solidarity had been broken. They wanted only a leader. An Italian for his people and one of the negroes for the mixed gang arose at a moment when Terence had stepped in to have a beer with his friend Gus, Pete Maloney had gone into the next street to buy something the Missus had asked him to get, and the Big Fellow was sitting on the steps of a disused building, eating the dinner the Missus had put up for him. A start of surprise at their ugly looks brought him to his feet, as the twenty or thirty swarthy men came toward him. Three or four spoke at once, serving notice that no man on that job was going to get more than a dollar and a half a day.

“Not if he earns it?” said the Big Fellow, who was standing on the second step.

They answered “No!” passionately, in many tongues.

“You speak English,” the Big Fellow said to one of the Italians. “Will you interpret for me? Now, if I do enough more work for another dollar, isn’t that mine? I need the money. If I have the strength to earn it, isn’t it mine? When they pay me two fifty a day and I do more work than any of you, then that means you will not be asked to do as much as I for what I get. If you will do as much as I, then it means two fifty a day for you. Isn’t that just? Isn’t that fair? If I were weak and could earn only a dollar, would you take that dollar away from me because I could not earn two?”

A few fell back, thinking of what he said. But the leaders pressed closely.

“Now I’m not going to let you come up on this step,” the Big Fellow warned them. “This is my restaurant, you see, and you’ll step on my coffee can.” That brought a smile from two of the negroes and from the members of the mixed gang and the Italians that understood English. “The laborer is worthy of his hire. I propose to have my two fifty a day.”

“No, you don’t!”

The leaders saw their cause wavering. They sprang toward him threateningly. What happened then happened quickly. One arm, with steel grey eyes—the eyes that never laughed—behind it stretched three men at the foot of the steps, and then the steel grey eyes, calm and ready, looked at the others.

“Do you think they are right?” he asked them. “If I can earn two fifty a day or any of you can, don’t you think you ought to have it?”

The majority seemed to think so, for they drew away.

“Boss, you two-fifta-a-day man, all righta,” said one of the Italians.

“An’ yo’ ain’ no Jim Jackson, is yo’?” said one of the negroes to the fallen negro.

Pete Maloney was turning a corner just as the incident occurred. And he out of it! How could he ever justify himself to the Missus for missing a fight where the “stahr boarder” was concerned? He came on a run in the hope that the

fracas might last long enough for him to get in a blow or two. Anyway, he could argue with the police.

“Ye divil, ye! Shure, sometimes I t’ought ye was a goody-goody,” he said, in rapture, to the Big Fellow. “Me faith in ye is complate. I seen ye. God bliss ye! Ye was a lion. Ye’ve got Irish blood—ye needn’t tell me!”

When the police came there was nothing for them to do. A swelling eye or sore jaw requires no ambulance.

“Shure, we’ve been upholdin’ the dignity of labor-r,” as Pete explained. By night he had convinced himself that he was in the fight.

After Terence saw what had happened he returned to Berkhoover’s, and, with a lively consciousness that he had obeyed orders exactly and without waiting on the superintendent, he telephoned direct to the Colonel, who had just finished luncheon at the club. An occasional neigh came whinnying back over the wire as he listened to the narrative.

“A number of men have already asked for a raise on the plea that they deserve it,” Terence stated, finally.

“They have, eh? Well, tell that young Harden I want to talk to him right away.”

“Yes, sir;” and he went for the Big Fellow, who, when he came to the ’phone, called cheerily:

“Good-day, Colonel Walker!”

“Good-day to you!” snapped the Colonel.

“Nice mess you’ve made!”

“ Yes, I expect I lost my temper.”

Big was really crestfallen and distressed, even if his voice were so pleasant. Presuming on his size, had he not been playing the bully against twenty men?

“ Couldn’t keep out of politics, could you? Had to be stirring up trouble! ” the Colonel pursued. “ Now, I’ve got to raise everybody’s wages. What office you running for? ”

“ None! ” came the answer, sharp and earnest. “ As for the men, I don’t think they all expect two fifty. Some two twenty-five, some two, and some one seventy-five. It depends on having a just foreman and a scale.”

“ Smooth talker, you are! ” the Colonel growled.

“ Oh, no. A hard worker who wants what he earns. And that very principle, the right of a man to what he earns, you have often defended in your speeches. It seems to me it is the way you should justify the possession of your fortune. Here your favorite principle is established.”

“ Ne-eh! ” was the only answer.

“ Now, if you make as high a wage as two fifty a day for picked men, you will have a wider choice and greater efficiency, I believe. Isn’t it better to pay two fifty for three dollars’ worth of work than one fifty for a dollar’s? ”

After a silence the Colonel said:

“ Well, it goes! It’ll make ’em hustle and I’m in a hurry to get this line down. It goes on this

job. Say, you don't want to reconsider coming with me? "

" Not when I've just got a raise, thank you."

" Well, don't go about knocking too many folks down! " The Colonel hung up the receiver. Then he said to himself: " Damn politician! If he didn't have the corn on me! "

XII

“ YE DIVIL, YE ! ”

“ **A** PRETTY kind of judge I should make! In two street brawls in a month! ” was the way in which the Big Fellow, in his shame, took counsel with himself, as he and Pete walked home. At this rate, his ambition for the bench would end in the prisoners’ box.

“ It’s a bad thing to lose your temper,” he remarked aloud.

“ It’s a worse un to lose a fight,” said Pete. “ But ’twasn’t a fight. Ye were on’y givin’ ’em a lisson.”

After supper Big hurried to *The Beacon* office and asked Booth if news of a row among the laborers on the new trolley line came in please to keep him out of it. Alarmed lest Madame Mother should hear of the affair, which meant that his occupation would be revealed to her, the next morning he scanned all the other papers closely.

According to *The Times*, which was Colonel Walker’s organ, the raise in wages was due to the public spirit of a great financier, who hoped to hasten the completion of the new line for the use of the people. *The Record*, which was anti-Walker, had a yarn about the fight by which the

victory was won. It gave Harden's name barely, but did not associate him with his father. When the Big Fellow saw this he lived in fear for two or three days, which would have been unnecessary had he known that Hiram Hobber, returning from Stottstown on the same train as the dailies from the city, read the yarn and immediately bought up all the edition for Bolton on purely domestic grounds. He did not want Mrs. Hobber to have any more weapons in her armory than those which she already kept bright and busy.

From Miss Two Braids, to whom Big had written the whole story, he soon had the assurance he wanted. She was of a militant disposition wherever he was concerned and she quite approved of his knocking down anybody who needed it on all occasions.

Without any effort on his part, he found himself a leader of the men who had risen in dignity and industry.

“ You all righta. I getta the two dolla,” said the Italian who had taken his part.

When Colonel Walker, who seemed to find peculiar pleasure in frequent inspection, was riding by the mixed gang, he called:

“ Mr. Politician, how's politics? ”

“ Pretty busy to keep you in town, Colonel,” was the answer.

“ Nice mess you've made. Everybody getting two fifty a day.”

“ Not everybody, Colonel. Only those who earn it. Pete here gets only two. But I under-

stand that we're doing about sixty per cent. more work a man. So you are a gainer."

"Ne-eh! I won't argue with a lawyer. Giddap!"

In August the Colonel sought refuge in the country, which called everybody out of the swelter who could go. The atmosphere of the streets was hazy with heat waves; a merciless sun ceased from burning only during brief showers. Sometimes Big would see red spots dancing round a paving-stone as he set it in place or took it out. Then he would wipe his brow and crack a joke at Pete; but he revived after that dousing under the hydrant in the evening, and after chatting with the Maloneys, large and small, he would begin his second day's work in the twenty-four hours.

"Ye're killin' yersilf, that's what ye are," said the good Missus. "If it wan't that ye're so sinsible, I'd say ye were actin' that crazy I'd sind for a doctor."

"I rest my head by day and my body by night. It's only one session for either part of me," he would answer.

"It's the way ye have of turnin' chalk into cheese with yer blarney," she would return, having the last word; "an' ye can't fool me. Ye're that tired, I can see!"

But Big tried to think that the heat was a blessing. On *The Beacon* the reporters were now taking their vacations by turns. This lessening of the force meant that he rarely went to the office

that he did not get a dollar assignment and on some happy nights a two-dollar one. Booth found that accuracy was second nature to the Big Fellow and that he had the gift of leading men to talk where old hands failed. Frequently he furnished the facts which others rewrote in a piquant and slapdash style.

Time strengthened his conviction that the newspaper trick was not his. But it occurred to him, out of his inborn knowledge of character, that he knew one whose trick it was. He had always liked Willy Sweetser, that class gossip, and had seen more in him than anyone else thought possible.

“ House Afire, you would make a great conflagration here,” he wrote to Willy, who was at home driving his good father, minister of the gospel, to special prayers for the future of an only son whose erratic hop-skip-and-jump amiability was his armor against criticism of cigarette smoking and a seemingly hopeless lack of any more serious intention in the world than to enjoy all the town gossip.

Back to Big, Willy wrote that the weather was hot, the peaches on the tree by the stone garden wall would soon be ripe, and “ all the world is fair and drowsy,” to quote him. “ The butterfly is not worrying about the winter store—not yet. I think I’m in love, and when I’m over thinking I am, I may come down. Being a newspaper man must be pretty hard work, though. Dad thinks I better study medicine. No, he didn’t say it that

way. He is honest and he chooses his words. He said *take* a medical course. I guess he thinks medicine best because it isn't bad form for doctors to smoke. But I might try reporting soon as it gets cooler. What's the news? Did you hear that"—and so on, on all kinds of class gossip.

Through the weeks that wore on till the intolerable heat moderated the Big Fellow had not missed a single day with the gang. Regularly he had sent a small part of his earnings home. With only one hundred and fifty dollars saved, he was studying possibilities one night in mid-September in *The Beacon* office as he waited, a tethered elephant, for Booth to give him a peanut. Again this steady worker faced the necessity of action. For the first time in his life a feeling of anarchy ran riot in his breast—in whose has it not?—under the leadership of discouragement.

The hard physical grind by day and the late vigils at *The Beacon*, often with only four hours' sleep out of the twenty-four, had slightly warped his perspective, perhaps. He did not think of trying to borrow the money he needed. According to his instinct of the situation—and he was stubborn in some respects—that would not be playing the game. His lack of the money-making gift, which Miss Two Braids' intuition had so readily understood, was not a consideration that he would admit as an excuse. He had set out to earn a certain sum in a certain length of time and he would earn it.

But how? At this question he had the feeling of one who must find still harder work and more work. In a spell of dizziness, though he appeared to be calm and self-possessed, he saw the electric-light bulb dancing in a haze around Booth's thatch of hair. He rubbed his eyes to make it settle into place and had quite recovered himself when Kiddy brought him a letter with *The International Law Review* in the upper right-hand corner, above the address.

The manuscript could never be inside that small envelope. Probably the editors wanted postage for its return. What if—yes, what if! *The Beacon* office, where sensations sent forth to the reading public were the days' routine, had a sensation of its own. Reporters' pencils jumped in the middle of a word at the sound of a mighty shout. The Big Fellow sprang on top of a desk which careened under his weight, while he held aloft a slip of yellow paper which was a talisman for a hundred dollars. As the youngster who coined the elephant and peanut simile said, the elephant had broken loose and was making a dash for the jungle.

“ I want you all to know it,” Big cried, “ because you have all been good to me! I want to tell you that I had to earn two hundred and forty-eight dollars and fifty cents by October first, and I've done it! I've won that essay prize! I'm so happy, Mr. Booth, that I don't care whether Eddy Smith was pushed or fell, so long as he had to go! ”

"Gee!" said Kiddy Witherbee, who did not know what it was all about.

There was one present who did, however. He was a lank, tall, slightly-stooped, smooth-faced man, the law reporter of *The Beacon*, which gave more attention to court reports than any other paper in the West. Occasionally the Big Fellow had seen him pass through the outer room into the editorial sanctum and more than once had been on the point of introducing himself, but was held back by the modesty of twenty-two in approaching sixty.

"You won it!" said Theodore Dexter, who had entered in time to hear that shout of joy.

"Yes, *The International Law Review* one. Yes! Oh, what luck!"

"What college are you?" Dexter asked, searchingly.

"——, '88."

"I'm of '48!"

While the others looked on, still puzzled, '48 extended both hands to take the hands of '88 in his grip.

Another man, who was a newcomer in that office, had entered just behind Dexter. In the blue atmosphere Willy Sweetser, half leaning on his silver-banded cane, with a cigarette between his teeth, seemed perfectly at home. As usual, he was on hand at the dramatic moment.

"H'lo, Big!" he said. "What's the row?"

By this time the newspaper sense of the city editor had risen to the occasion.

“ There’s a head! ” he said. “ College man—worked as a gang laborer—licked the gang in a fight—wins great prize of *International Law Review*—refused job from Colonel Walker—honor judges would crave—modest, big fellow—and all right in our town! Good human interest! Spader! ” he called, “ I guess you’re the one to do this.”

But the striking figure at that moment was Willy Sweetser. This teller of tales, who liked to be where things were happening, his head thrust forward and a little to one side, with quick, greedy eye, had taken in the tableau and with alert mind had grasped the situation. In his movement was the keenness of a terrier after rats, as three or four steps brought him to the city editor’s desk, over which he leaned till his nose almost touched Booth’s head.

“ This is just like Big! ” he said, in a high-pitched voice. “ I know him like a book. I went to school with him! He is my friend! He is old Big—none in the same class! Let me write it! ”

All of which was most astonishing to Booth, who had never seen Willy before.

“ There’s no story in this! ” declared Big. “ Who wants to hear that I’ve won an essay prize? ”

“ And that’s also like you, Big! ” said Willy. “ I’ll put that in what I write.”

“ Do you wonder that I found he was no newspaper man? ” Booth asked the newcomer.

“ I see it! I see it! ” cried Willy. “ I can write it like mice! I’m going to write it, anyway. Can I sit here? And use this paper? ”

Without waiting on an answer he took a vacant place and began in his irregular, school-boyish hand, with his whole body moving at the same time as the pencil, while Spader stood by for further orders.

“ See if I don’t know old Big! See if I don’t! ” Willy mused absently, and the others watched this invader curiously till he filled a sheet. “ There! ” he cried, passing it to Booth. “ Say, but this is fun! ” and he went on furiously covering a second sheet.

Booth read the first, with eyes pressing close to the paper.

“ They’re born! ” he exclaimed. “ I always said they were! Let it run! Let it run! Never mind, Spader! You go right ahead,” he told Willy. “ Anything we can get? Cigars or a drink? ”

“ No,” answered Willy, “ not even cigarettes. You just put in the dots and the curley cues for me—I never was much on punctuation—and I’ll reel it off like yarn off a spinning-wheel. This is nuts for me! ”

Temporarily, Willy, blissfully unconscious of the fact, had taken the center of the stage away from Big, who, with Dexter, watched him for a while. He was more concentrated on a single thing than he had ever been known to be before, when he had either pencil or book in hand.

“ Won’t you come over to my rooms, Harden? ” Dexter asked Big. “ We’ll have a chat together. ”

“ Oh, I *would* like to, Mr. Dexter, ” Big answered.

“ We’ll return for this other ’88 when he is through with his yarn, ” Dexter added.

“ Coming back for you, Willy. Don’t fail to wait! ” said Big, nudging the writer’s arm.

“ All right! ” answered Willy, vacantly. “ But I’ve only begun. This is great! ”

“ Let it run! Let it run! ” ’48 and ’88 heard Booth calling, as they left the editorial rooms and started downstairs. In the business office Big turned to Dexter:

“ This means more to the folks at home than to me and I have only ten minutes yet for the night mail. Will you wait for me? ”

Stationery he got from a clerk and, using one of the wall desks, he wrote the good news to Madame Mother and to Miss Two Braids and had started to seal the envelopes when a “ P.S. ” occurred to him in a peal of joy.

“ Yes, there’ll be money enough with what I earn in the next two weeks, ” he said aloud, “ and I’ll do it. ”

“ ‘ Tell Pam, ’ he wrote, ‘ that he can look around for a cow. I’ll send the price of her tomorrow—but he will have to wait for a lawn mower. ’ ”

And he thought gleefully: “ How I would like to be home to see him, perfectly ‘ correct ’ in his

mental parts, leading Liz home!" Then he begged his companion's pardon for laughing to himself.

"What was the idea—your 'lead,' as they call it in the whirlwind shop up there—of your essay?" Dexter asked.

"I think that after I looked those old Romans up," said the Big Fellow, "I tried to inject some Abraham Lincoln into Justinian."

"Yes, yes, of course," was the response, in a voice so even and scholarly that it was like the musical hum of a brook. Theodore Dexter had slipped his arm into the prize-winner's as if they were about to walk, but stopped. "Yes, of course, and you might have put that in the manuscript, too."

There was only one word and the word was fine for that face which Big saw in the light shining out of the business-office window, as the old counsellor-at-law—rather than lawyer—as he preferred to be called, paused to enjoy the news he was to divulge.

"I was interested, you see," he said, "because I gave that prize. I was also the judge, and I never associated the name of James Harden with that of a cub reporter on *The Beacon*."

"Well, all I can say," returned Big, "over everything that has happened in the last half-hour is what Kiddy says, and that is Gee! and to tell you that you are the greatest hero in the world to me!"

"But," continued Dexter, "the subject was

Roman colonization and you didn't stick to it at all.”

“ No. I thought it over,” the Big Fellow said, “ and, well, I concluded that it was high time we buried the Romans! The conditions were very broad and said that each candidate was to treat the subject in his own way. I tried to take a modern view.”

“ Which you did,” returned Dexter, “ by taking as your postulate that the United States were suddenly called upon to give law and order to a strange race of people. Oh, I remember one of your sentences: ‘ The British have been in India for three hundred years, and if they were to go to-morrow they would leave only their bridges and roads and no imprint on the native mind.’ And you would begin with the mind. That is right.”

“ I wrote in the way I saw things.”

“ Yes, and fulfilled my idea. The editor of the *Review* thought it an odd subject, and I told him that that was the reason I selected it. Men take dumb-bell exercise or play golf to keep their bodies in trim. But how about mental gymnastics to keep the mind in trim? Any subject would have done, with the condition that each writer should look at it in his own way. I wanted to see these young fellows rattle their brains around a bit and I had a hundred dollars to spare, which you won—and why should we be standing here when I asked you to come over to the shop? ”

Across the street from *The Beacon* office, where

the old bachelor lived, he had rooms and office together. He went to sleep every night to the sound of the presses, and up two flights was the Promised Land to the Big Fellow. No small library bounded the scholastic eccentricity of Theodore Dexter. In unbroken ranks his books stood against the walls of the large outer room, and flanking a passage the length of the building the visitor saw, when his host lighted another gas-jet, more files and a desk by a window.

“ I call them my soldiers of peace,” said their owner, “ and I am their garrison commander. I have a saying that a lawyer may know his fifty books of precedent and reports and rise to great success, but he must know the thousand books to be truly a counsellor of the law. He must know equity rather than precedent; he must know men; he must know the humanities.”

“ I’ve been taking a full course in the humanities,” said the Big Fellow, and exhibited his calloused hands.

“ Most valuable! Most!” returned Dexter, laughing. “ But you had not given up the study of the law? ” he asked.

“ I hadn’t begun, except in books I used to pick up in old stalls without much regard to what they were so they were law and cheap ”—which explains how he had Somebody on Torts in his senior classical year.

“ You hadn’t!” with surprise subdued by a train of thought, which ended in more questions.

The Big Fellow simply, as if it were nothing

remarkable, told his whole story, all except the secret which only Miss Two Braids should share about being a judge. When he half excused himself for his decision by saying that if he went to work for Colonel Walker he preferred to go as a business man rather than as a lawyer—“ Foolish, but I saw the law, my love of the law, that way ”—Theodore Dexter said, “ Right! right! right! ” with such a military sharpness that the sober, leather-bound volumes appeared guilty of insubordination in not dipping from their shelves in salute.

“ The love of the law! That is it! ” Dexter proceeded. “ Unless you love it too much. I loved it too much. I expect Colonel Walker is glad I did. But—but I would teach you that living it and making it is better. All this,” nodding to his books, “ is worth nothing unless you carry it to somebody—to somebody besides the experts themselves. To have and not to give is rank selfishness. With good laws and broad, unselfish men to interpret them, there would be a cessation of bloodshed in the world and largely of misery.”

He faced round, his eyes glowing, and put a hand on the Big Fellow’s shoulder, caressingly, yet firmly—the touch of appreciation and of seniority and instruction—and in the easy way of a man who takes a discovery quietly, he said:

“ I think we’ll let the Colonel build the trolley line without your help, for I’m getting fairly old. I’m sixty. My books on the State laws pay me income enough. For thirty years I’ve been cover-

ing court cases for *The Beacon*. A strange work for me, in a way, but it's been my most serviceable work." (He might have added that the Judges read his reports and thought of them before they made decisions and often came to him for advice. If a law really beyond attack were wanted, its promoters asked him to frame it. As he said once, sententiously, however, business was not always so brisk in that line.) " *The Beacon* will keep up the feature a while yet, but eventually the headlines will devour us—yes, alive, I expect! I've been looking for a successor. I've found him to-night—and meanwhile, you can study law here with me. I'm something of a university, myself."

"Honest?" It was a little too good after the anarchy of two hours ago.

"I am not given to the Spanish politeness which offers you a house and lot, meaning that you are to take a cigarette."

"You—you don't know—you can't know what this is to me!" was all the Big Fellow could say. "To study here with you!"

"It's a pity if old '48—and that was a good class, too—can't do a turn for young '88. No more thanks. Why, of course you couldn't be studying law. You've only just been graduated, and, by the way, that other '88 ought to have finished his yarn by this time. We'll get him and have a '48-'88 banquet."

It was after midnight when they were back in the street. A blaze of light came from the

second floor of *The Beacon* building and from the pressroom in the basement, and past the dim, silent business office they ascended the stairs to the editorial rooms, where they paused in the doorway watching a dramatic scene. It was only half an hour before the forms for the first edition were to close. All but a few of the reporters had finished their work. They were gathered around Willy, who was writing furiously with fingers, head, arms, and his whole body and, to judge by the varying emotions on his face, living over every scene he was depicting. If the crowd at Madison Square Garden on a circus night had been looking on, he would have been undisturbed in his serious intensity of concentration.

“ Let it run! Let it run! Don’t be afraid of length! ” Booth called to him for the twentieth time.

Plump! a second galley of proof came up the pneumatic tube. As Booth read it he snapped his fingers in his excitement.

“ That’s it! That’s it! ” he shouted. “ I always said they were born! ”

His hair was more touseled than ever. He had removed his green eye-shade in honor of an event which, to that office, was like the sudden birth of some hero springing into fame with a cavalry charge.

Willy Sweetser had taken no literary course; he had done no writing except what the average college student must. But his mind was full. Every sentence snapped out a contributing idea.

His style, uncultivated and natural, ran like a prairie fire rather than with the cultivated, slow-burning, sinuous calculation of a fuse. He had something to say and he kept on saying it, bang-bang-bang!

“Hope you fixed the curleycues and dots all right and all the set-the-table business,” he remarked, as he rose with his last page of copy; “and maybe my spelling is a little off. I never could see why ‘which’ shouldn’t be ‘whitch’—and it’s which, anyway. Gee! But this was great! I even forgot to smoke”—with a glance at the half-burned cigarette where he had left it when he took up the pencil. “H’lo, Big! I’m yours for anything, now. I’ve written you up in a way to make your eyes bulge. I haven’t had so much fun since that night I got up the lampoon and pasted it on all the professors’ doors”—a famous occasion, which might have resulted in his expulsion if it had not been for the Big Fellow.

Booth followed the new reporter to the door and wrung his hand.

“Say, we want to take you on!” he said; and he was praying in his heart that here was no “one story” man. No! He knew better. This youngster had the trick. “Drop in to-morrow afternoon.”

“Think I will. Can you give me another one to do—another one where I can fill myself full of what it is all about and then dash it off slap into the faces of folks so they’ll have to read?”

“You bet!” said Booth.

“ And will you look after the curleycues? ”

“ There isn’t much trouble about them. Your kind of copy punctuates itself.”

“ I’ll show up, all right. Now for food. Say, Big, wouldn’t I like to drop in at Blank’s! ” (a chop house in the college town). “ I’m hungry as a lean, hairy, old bear in the springtime! ”

’48, however, knew Blank’s equal in the city. Downtown was a restaurant with no row of electric lights or brilliant chandeliers to consume money that should go into food. Here came newspaper men, lawyers, or business men who had to remain late at night at their offices, and sometimes men from the Union Club, served by Jerry, who wore broad, flat-heeled shoes, an ample apron, and silver-rimmed spectacles, over which he looked quizzically as he took the order and moved slowly but grandly away to the grill, as became a man who had served chops before you were born. They ate of that which Jerry’s oldest customer ordered and talked of the old school till Jerry said it was closing time.

“ Say, that paper ought to be out now, hadn’t it? ” Willy asked, earnestly. “ I’d like to see it—I’d like to see it printing.”

A man is born, a man is married, he fires a rifle for the first time, and for the first time he sees something he wrote in actual print. From the shelf of the press Willy Sweetser—Theodore Dexter having the open sesame to the holy of holies—took off the moist morning edition, while the roar of the multiples and the rattle of the milk-

wagons were breaking the silence of the sleeping world. There it was, his child, in three columns, an inside-page "feature," and leaded and headed in a way to make the Big Fellow, whose first great story was made by himself for another to write, blush and shake his head. But what could he do? As for Willy, he read his maiden effort all through without thought that anybody was waiting on him. Then he asked the pressman questions and looked over the machine.

"Say, I'd like to have one of them for my own!" he declared, in his first definite expression of a real ambition. "Think of talking to hundreds of thousands of people every morning!"—which certainly did beat mouth-to-mouth gossip.

"You've found yourself, Willy. I always knew you would;" and Big lifted him off his feet with a great hug.

Theodore Dexter was for putting up the '88's in his rooms. But the Big Fellow thought he ought to go back to Pete and the Missus. They were his good friends and he was sure they would like to know that he had won the essay prize.

Then all three were for Maloney's and, now that they had started, to make a night of it. With '48 having '88 on either arm, they set out through the deserted streets, singing the old songs of '48 and the modern songs of '88.

"Everybody's been mighty good to me!" said the Big Fellow, in an interval. "It's a bully good world, I tell you!"

"It's the best ever! Think of it! I wrote

three whole columns without smoking a cigarette!" shouted Willy.

" If you know how to bring the good out of it," said '48.

Shortly after the break of dawn they appeared before the Maloneys' door, wherein stood Pete, rubbing his sleepy eyes and surveying the landscape.

" Ye divil, ye! " he said. " The top o' the mornin' to yez all! Come in fer breakfast. Shure there's room. The childher can take theirs in their hands."

XIII

SOME VARYING VIEWS

ALL the world that bought *The Beacon* regularly and some of the world that did not buy it regularly read, the next morning, the story of how one graduate had spent his summer holiday. It was the way the thing was done as much as the subject-matter that caught public fancy. The reader felt the writer's enthusiasm; the writer, he knew, was not counting words or pay. Booth called it a "feature" that amounted to a "real news beat." Willy Sweetser called it "telling everybody what everybody ought to know about Big."

The view of each of the characters whose careers had crossed or influenced that of the Big Fellow, throws light on them and on him.

From Ned Walker, at a hunting-camp in Northern Michigan:

"Printed in the newspaper where he worked —a gallery player, as I always thought, though I admire his nerve."

From Colonel Walker:

"Politician, damn him! Wish I'd got him, damn him!"

From the old heavyweight, " moreover," " if," " but," " and," " whereas," and " on the other hand " editorial writer of *The Beacon* to Booth:

" Yes, I read it all through, I must admit; but very sensational and—er—youthful—and an allowance of space out of all keeping with its news importance."

From Epaminanidad, who spelled *cow* out of all the headlines:

" Mah min's jes' as kerrected an' clear."

From Hiram Hobber, with his thumbs thrust in the armholes of his waistcoat, and his feet on the table:

" Didn't I tell you, Mrs. Hobber! Didn't I tell you, Mrs. Hobber! Now who says that I ain't a jedge of men! Yes, I *am* goin' to hire them potatoes dug—yes, I *am*, and I don't care a jugful what the neighbors say! "

From Kiddy Witherbee:

" Gee! " and again, " Gee! "

From Theodore Dexter:

" A clean human document whose truth shines out between the writer's lines."

From Pete Maloney:

" It's more ye've been kapin' in the back o' yer head, me b'y, than ye let out o' yer mouth."

From Mrs. Maloney:

" Shure, the little gossoon'll make ye Mayor yit, an' whin ye air it's a place in th' coort-

house f'r Pete I'm wantin'. Wouldn't he look fine a-tindin' door f'r the thrials! "

From Mrs. Billings, of Poverty Row, when the Big Fellow forwarded her share of the reward for the *magnum opus*:

" I'm sending the five dollars right back; but if you ever come here and don't come to see me, then you're not half the man I thought you were."

From Ramsdell:

" How like old Big! I can see his eyes when that gang jumped him! "

From Miss Two Braids:

" I have two copies in my room. I heard the bees humming all day so happily and all the fireflies are out with their lanterns and I hear them singing a little song of joy to-night. But I'm proudest of the way you mastered the gang. You are a great big *man*, aren't you, Big? I like that better than Mister Ninety in Calculus, or Jim, and I am going to call you Big, as they did at college, after this."

From Aunt Julia:

" My! *My!* MY! " and then, " MY! *My!* My! " down the scale.

From Madame Mother, and she an abolitionist:

" My! And he worked beside negroes and immigrants like some criminal! "

" But he won the essay prize! " put in Miss Two Braids.

" Yes. *My* boy! " Still, he had not taken his

own mother into counsel. These sensational headlines shocked her sense of quiet respectability.

“And he is going to study law, now,” Miss Two Braids added.

Which Madame Mother admitted gladly—“but he should have told me all!”

“Willy, you make me feel foolish,” the Big Fellow said for himself.

“Get out! You like it in your heart, you know you do!” Willy returned.

“I like to think you could write it and that you’ve found yourself, Willy,” he replied; “and no, I don’t like it.”

His mind was not subjective. It had never been introspective except when he had his moment of anarchy. He little cared whether the whole newspaper was about him or whether he never appeared in the headlines in all his life. Why should he when happiness had been crowned with more happiness? For Theodore Dexter had done another thing, which, the more he thought of it, the more it surprised him. In his heart he, too, was a little of an aristocrat. Who is not? Pete Maloney certainly was that day when he dropped his pick and defied Colonel Walker. The fact that the Big Fellow was the son of James Harden, who was only three classes ahead of himself, had brought the offer to the counsellor’s lips after it had occurred to him in the enthusiasm of the reunion of ’48 and ’88.

“I’m getting to be too much of a hermit. I need company,” he said. “If you want to share

my rooms and live with me, breakfast brought up any hour, dinners out, mostly at Jerry's, or a chop if it is rainy, why, I would welcome you, and any time we disagree, as becomes two honest men, either of us will not hesitate to say so."

It should be added, also, that the more he thought of this innovation the more he liked it. The prospect set something glowing in his heart which Miss Two Braids would have called the fire-flies of content and peace. He had a disciple, now. What man not a blind egoist who reaches sixty without children would not have one, if he believes that there is any good in him that he would perpetuate?

"Will I come!" cried the Big Fellow. "Oh, will I! You have given me water and wings. I was only webfooted before!"

Dexter and Willy had planned to bring him back to his new quarters that morning. But he would not have such an abrupt leave-taking of his host. He liked the Maloney round of the ladder so well that he was always to make himself welcome there.

"No. I'll go to work with Pete as usual to-day, and I can tell McPhane I'll quit to-morrow."

Of course, Colonel Walker would have called him a politician and Ned would have called him a gallery player for this.

"Now will ye listen to him!" said Mrs. Maloney.

"Ye divil, ye!" said Pete, which was the highest compliment he could pay anyone. "We might

cilibrate the gr-rand day it is be thrashin' the whole gang: Shure, we kin do it. Didn't we do it oncet? "

In high feather, though in overalls, they went away together. McPhane blinked and shook his head over a puzzle past his understanding. The gang who had heard the news stared at the Big Fellow in wonder as they saw him drop into action with his pick. Some of the cynical ones thought the whole thing a "newspaper fake." Pete, however, enlightened them. He was orating all day, and according to the Big Fellow's rule of pay for work done, Pete belonged on this day in a special class by himself of fifty-cents-a-day men. That night the Big Fellow said good-by to his fellow-laborers and shook hands with all, including the negro whom he had felled.

"Maka de run for office me vota for you," said the Italian.

"Yes, he'll be going into politics," said Willy Sweetser, who was present on the way to get facts for a new story.

The repetition of that idea amused Big, who had about as much thought of politics as of pugilism.

"It's the gr-rand day it's been," Pete told Big that night, when he went to his place on the porch for the last time, "an' it's har-rd an' joyful ye'll hit the pillow to-night."

It was long after nine when he awoke and Pete who had made a holiday in honor of his departure was the first to greet him. Shure, 'twas a

that was going to see the “ stahr boarder ” safely into his new quarters.

“ God bliss ye! ” called Mrs. Maloney, from the doorway.

“ God bless you, Mrs. Maloney, and all the children! ” he answered.

“ An’ whin ye’re Mayor,” said she—“ an’ it’s Mayor that live wire of a gossoon ’ll be makin’ ye with his noospaper spakin’—remimber Pete’s to have a place in the coorthouse.”

XIV

FOR A CITY

PRESENTLY, exercising a novelist's privilege, by making the Roman numeral II we shall span a decade, in which Miss Two Braids, on whose moods we are to wait, grows from girlhood to womanhood, and the other characters are making their careers. It seems worth while, however, to give a few glimpses of them in the course of the years which hurry by to the heart of things. But anyone who chooses may turn over the pages to the heart of things at once, at the risk of missing a part of the mind of things.

That same reporter who was the author of the "elephant and peanut" simile gave Sweetser the name of "The Hummer," which stuck, for Willy, it was said, ran by electricity like the presses. His rapid rise in newspaperdom, which may storm a position every morning, had its likeness in the rise of lieutenants to division command in the Civil War.

When his father, the minister, heard of his first success he wrote:

"William, you know I have never allowed a

Sunday paper in our house. I hope you are not working for the Sunday editions."

And Willy answered: "The Sunday is made up on Saturday."

Said the father: "This is a quibble, I fear. How about the Monday?"

Said the son: "We must get that out on Sunday night, so you famished Monday readers will have some news."

Later, he sent the happy word that he had stopped the eternal smoking of cigarettes.

"You see now what I escaped—being a saturated, third-rate, aimless doctor, who sickened his patients with tobacco fumes."

But he took no credit for reform. It was a part of his reborning.

"I simply am so busy I forget to smoke," to use his own words. "I love this work. I love it for itself and the explosions."

His widening vision, with a certain genius for grasping essentials, mapped the whole city in its people, its interests and their character. This was a bad newspaper town, as newspaper men said. Its public spirit was low; a rival city was surpassing it in population and increase of industry, and the situation was due more than he or the citizens realized to John Byng. Cunningly Byng had dominated the newspaper situation with his *Courier*, which salaciously taught people to love scandal and crime in order that he might feed them more. Living partly in Washington and partly abroad, his influence for sale,

his one criterion was income. "I don't care where it comes from so I get it," as he said.

Willy's eye was on that broken-down *Sentinel*, whose succeeding owners had found that an organ which obeyed your orders was an expensive luxury. Once more in its tattered career of the gutters, from millionaire's door to millionaire's door, it was for sale. In an hour after he heard the news, a wiry little man with a puggish nose and snappy black eyes and quick, nervous gestures was sitting in the sacred chair beside Colonel Walker's desk. The Colonel knew him well. No leading citizen could easily help knowing The Hummer.

"Yes, I've heard *The Sentinel* is for sale," said the Colonel, for he never admitted that anybody knew any inside matters of the financial world before himself. "I owned one newspaper and that cost me enough. Rather waste my money on a country place that I never visit."

"I don't want *you* to buy it. I want to borrow two hundred thousand dollars from you. I'm going to do the buying myself."

The Colonel forsook his whinny for a whistle.

"You do, eh! On what security?"

"On this!" and Willy tapped his forehead. "The same kind of security with which you began life and with which you have made your fortune. One hundred thousand going into new presses. Other hundred needed to get things started. You'll take a mortgage for five hundred thousand for three years, regular interest and

profit of three hundred thousand. How's that for a speculation? At the end of three years I own the paper or I'm busted—bankrupt—finished, and the wreckage is yours."

"Will I have anything to say about its policy?" asked the Colonel, amused.

"No. Nobody but me."

"Hammer me, I suppose, 'long with the others?"

"Maybe—very likely, sometimes. I don't want a paper otherwise. I'm not going to sell my soul for a mess of pottage, but I want some pottage to give my soul a chance. If, as a railroad man, you put all the sons of all your friends in all the jobs and gave pink teas in the offices and dressed the engineers in silks and interfered with the traffic manager's getting up excursions because you didn't like excursions yourself, you wouldn't make much money. Your bankers wouldn't if they had to loan money to anybody on his social standing without security. Well, no outsider can boss a newspaper. It's a business of itself. I'm going to tell everybody everything and tell all 'that's fit to print.' There's enough the old *Courier* doesn't tell every day to make a big circulation."

"Nobody that wanted me to buy a paper ever talked in that way," whinnied the Colonel. "But I've got no money, young man. I'm borrowing from the banks all the time myself. Ne-eh! Going to hammer Byng any?" he asked.

"All the time! All the time!" Willy beat a



- M. LEONE BRACKER -

"I want to borrow two hundred thousand dollars from you."

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tattoo of delight on the arm of his chair. "I'm longing to get at that gold pig."

"Gold pig, eh?" The Colonel chuckled. "Won't be much room to hammer me if you are going to hammer Byng so hard, eh?"

"I hope you know that no honest man would ever think of putting you two in the same class. Why, Colonel, you are a great builder, though you can't have everything your own way any more than anyone else can. Fact is, I've a private rating—" and the Colonel had to laugh over the idea—"for every important citizen of this town. Our present Mayor is about + 10 in official efficiency. The County Clerk is — 10. Boss Birch is + 60 as a boss. Jim Harden's + 100 in the light and the law. You are + 100 in corporate efficiency" (which did not displease the Colonel) "and Byng's in a class by himself. He's + 100 gold pig. But I won't promise not to criticise you—no, sir!" quoth this new censor of public morals. "And I'm not going to tear down. I'm going to help build."

"Likable little lunatic! Full of ginger and honest in his lunacy or he wouldn't talk up to me that way," thought the Colonel. Willy was at least one inch shorter than the Colonel, and the Colonel called everyone little who wasn't at least four inches taller than himself. "Ne-eh! If your ability is equal to your damned impertinence it won't take you long to own all the newspapers in the country! Well, confound you! suppose we go over and see Brooks at the bank. I never got hold

of the newspaper business as a business just this way before. Thought nobody but jackals like Byng with a yaller streak could make it pay—in this town, anyway. Put it up to Brooks as a business proposition. Talk right up to him just the way you have to me! ”

With hope giving him a richer vocabulary, Willy, in a cataract of ideas and precious little spray, pressed the banker, who quietly pressed him with telling business questions which Willy met with aggressive answers.

“ And you’re going to have a go at Byng? ” Brooks finally asked, almost greedily, unctuous as was his manner.

The attraction of the plan as a speculation to both capitalists was heightened by the fervent hope that the “ little lunatic ” might manage to land on Byng; and Byng they loathed and feared for what he was. He had blackmailed them for traction stock; he knew no morals. “ A curse to the city,” they said, and suffered him.

“ I own a newspaper, all my own! I own a newspaper! ” the Big Fellow heard over the telephone and something else that sounded like “ fireworks; ” for Willy had already rung off and was calling up Booth, whom he wanted as managing editor.

“ William Sweetser ” he put at the head of the editorial columns and underneath, “ Tell Everybody and Tell All—That’s Fit to Print. ” The dead rose to life. At first, the people saw that *The Sentinel* was different. Then it became a ques-

tion of "What has *The Sentinel* on its mind to-day?" and everybody wanted to know.

We see Willy in action, with a stenographer at his elbow—the stenographer attended to the curley cues and the "whitches"—and telephones ringing, office boys running, and proofs flying on and off his desk, organizing his army and loving to stay late at night with the presses.

Booth's hair is still touseled; he still wears the green eye-shade and snaps his fingers in delight over any good features; but he is another man, no longer a mercenary with his tongue in his cheek, his genius no longer suppressed. All these young men in the outer room also have the spirit of a craft, of a service, of a cause. From *The Courier* youngsters came, from towns far and near, asking for apprenticeship. Change, change; surprise, surprise, in all honest purpose is the rule of Willy's nature that catches the public.

"You're going to write about the result of the caucuses to-morrow," he says to the editorial writers. "Let's you and I go to some caucus! Get next the people! Move about! That'll give you more than you can get out of books. And we're making good. We're winning friends; we're spreading the light."

"So many, many words about Henry James who writes so many words which so few people read"—this to the literary editor. "Tell us about this Smith and his 'Heart's Hero' story that thousands are devouring. Why are they? Take the heart out of the story and out of Smith and

slap it under a two-column head for the Sunday. Just talk it off! Say something with every sentence! Say it, looking the reader in the eye! And why not answer this question next week: 'Why does everybody talk about Henry James without reading him?' "

"Go out to lunch with the shopgirls"—this to the editor of the Woman's Page. "Meet Mrs. Jones, who keeps the little candy shop; and Mrs. Gorman, who is raising ten in a three-room flat. We mustn't be too introspective."

"Let's organize a lot of our newsboys into a battalion, give 'em a uniform, have the Mayor review 'em and have 'em salute the police"—this to Booth. "It will teach them manners and straighten out growing spinal columns. We'll publish a photograph of 'em saluting. Let 'em appoint a committee to choose a uniform! Let 'em choose a commander! Interview the commander! And we want everybody to read, eh, Booth?—and we've got a mission, too, besides the fireworks and the fun we're having."

In the small hours, while the reporters lingered—and they grew to have a fondness for the office—feeling, like soldiers on the breastworks after the fight, that they ought not to go before the General went, he would come out of his own room and probably put his hand on some youngster's shoulder and say:

"That was a bully story of yours!" Then he might ask: "What do you think is wrong with the paper? How would you change it?"

The reporter would tell him candidly, which was *The Sentinel* way.

“ Well, let’s try it,” Willy would say. “ We’re certainly making things hum! We’re going to win out! We are! ”

We fear that *The Sentinel* was sensational. This was all but a conviction in a quiet country parsonage where the Reverend Sweetser hoped for the best. But one of his son’s letters, at least, began well. It had a new quality:

“ I see you with the study-light on your face, dad, puzzled over these headlines,” he wrote. “ But just think that your boy has a flock, too! Yours is a fine, quiet one and you cannot give them much news or increase circulation much. I can! Here’s a whole city and I have to make ’em read. You use hymns and I use fireworks to get ’em.

“ I know I wasted my time at college. I ought to have studied harder—but it’s too late and I’m too busy, now, and I’ve got Big to fall back on. I owe it all to Big—all the good of it. When I get wrong I go to him. He straightens me out on the moral path—he and Uncle Theodore. Big’s a power. ‘ You’re going too far,’ he says. And I say: ‘ We’ve got to have the pottage. The cashier’s calling for dough.’ And I slow down. Or maybe he says: ‘ Keep on firing! You’ve got a good cause.’

“ Some day I’m going to bring my newsboy battalion up for a holiday in the country. We’ll camp out in Thorn’s woods and have the time of

our lives. You'll preach 'em a sermon—and make it a short one, won't you? But that's got to wait on more money than I have now. It's a hot fight—and I do love the explosions."

The Reverend Sweetser sighed over this. He found it enlightening on some things; on others he was in deeper doubt than ever. The closing sentence sounded like anarchy. It destroyed the effect of the filial love of the first.

But the Reverend Sweetser little knew the nature of the antagonist his son was fighting. A tremor of dismay had gone out from the office of *The Courier* to Washington. The great absentee gave up a yachting party and came back himself to take command and crush a rival in its infancy. Now, of his kind, Byng was a devil-genius. Mr. Trennet, a smug, hired creature who always rubbed his hands and talked in whispers, was his local manager. Willy called him the trough-bearer and put him at — 90 as a newspaper man. The principal on returning, with wealth at his call, hesitated at nothing. He blackmailed *The Sentinel's* advertisers away from it; increased the size of his paper, made a cut to the newsdealers, and tried to bribe Willy's reporters to leave him. But they generally remained.

"It's a fight for a city!" Willy said one day to the Big Fellow.

"If you see it that way, it is. If I had a million dollars I'd give it all to you to go on," said Big.

Word was passed to the financial community that *The Sentinel* could not hold out much longer.

Credit grew difficult. Willy was oftener in the business office than in the editorial rooms, without any cessation in his attacks on Byng.

With a great "spread" one Monday morning he made the city ring. Before the day was over he found that Gudger, the witness who stood for his facts, had left the city, destination unknown; and the next morning came the libel suit for five hundred thousand dollars.

"We'll not be long, now," said Byng. "I might offer him a job when he's bust!"

And Mr. Trennet, who was always called Mister, rubbed his hands and whispered his admiration.

XV

PLOWING, PLOWING, PLOWING

NEITHER member of the firm of Dexter and Harden—old wine and young wine from the same bush—had any reason for regretting a partnership formed on such short acquaintance. Willy made a third in spirit, but was too irregular in his habits to be one of them in any other respect.

When Dexter's old housekeeper died, who do you think took her place? Well, who? None other, as the old-fashioned novelist says, than our old friend Mrs. Billings, of Poverty Row.

“With two mildly insane men to look after and one raving lunatic—raving but cheerful—running in and out and two student lamps to keep filled, I am loaded down with responsibility,” she would explain; “and with them never taking their dinners in, I really haven't enough to do to keep my mind out of mischief.”

She was genuinely jealous of Jerry, of the grand air and flat-heeled shoes, all unknown to Jerry.

“He's a slatternly critter, I'll warrant,” she declared, “and things aren't cooked any too clean in that ‘hole in the wall,’ either!”

“ With you our *ménage* is perfect,” said Uncle Theodore, as the Big Fellow called him.

“ If you think you can fool me with your dead languages you’re mistaken,” she returned. “ If you had any real reason for not eating at home you’d give it in English. It’s just another way of saying *opus*, that Mister Big Fellow always fell back on when he knew that he hadn’t a single argument on his side.”

That promise of being something of a university himself Theodore Dexter had fulfilled in letter and spirit. More than this, he was a disciplinarian.

“ Put up that book, my disciple! ” he would say. “ You’re falling into the same error I did. I’m not going to let you waste your life the way I have mine. All these ”—with a wave of his hand to the books—“ are but agents to help you understand humanity. They are fleshless unless you study humanity, and humanity is but flesh without them. Come, put it up! Let’s go and tell Boss Birch what a selfish, narrow-minded politician he is. You’ll get no dead languages from him, as Mrs. Billings would say.”

The Big Fellow kept on with his law reports for *The Beacon* even after he was admitted to the bar, and Kiddy Witherbee, having studied stenography in odd hours, took his dictation faithfully and oh, how proudly, night after night.

“ Boss, that was a good piece; ” or, “ Boss, you are more at home in this kind of work than you were in having Eddy Smith pushed when he wasn’t,” Kiddy, solemn and bespectacled, would

say, as he closed his notebook. It was a privilege which the "friend at court" seemed to enjoy to call the Big Fellow "Boss" when they were alone; and Kiddy himself was going to night school to get all the learning he could, considering that he was the sole support of his mother, "and that has always kept me pretty busy, Boss," to use his own words.

Uncle Theodore's fear that his disciple might become a recluse was more playful than real, as he well knew. A good practice was accruing and of the kind Big liked. Some of it brought in but small fees, if any, and some was profitable. When men did not want to go to law against somebody but wanted to know the law they sought his advice, which was cheaper in the end. People from the water-front wards had a way of coming to consult him when they were in trouble instead of going to brilliant political orators nearer home.

Nor was "that damned politician" altogether out of politics. He has been guilty of that offense so often that it would be prejudicial, though he faced superior numbers as usual, to say that he did have to knock down any member of a gang of ballot-box stuffers in those days of a cruder ballot system than a later generation enjoys. He was in one campaign, particularly, with all his might and working hard for a principle against Boss Birch, with whom, nevertheless, he was always on good-natured personal relations.

"He's the kind that laughs if he's licked," said the Boss, "and laughs if he wins, and never gets

mad, and is always on the job; and they're a bad kind to beat"—for Big cost the Boss a heavy loss of votes in one of his wards.

For everybody, indeed, he had a smile, a thorough-going, all-wool kind of a smile. He went about a great deal and he had in an easy way the faculty of meeting all kinds of men. Faces and names he remembered, and, in turn, no one who had once shaken his hand was likely to forget that big fellow. Many talks he made at many gatherings. Usually these lacked the sensation for headlines. His hearers, at first thinking him dry, listened to the end and went away with the comfortable feeling that they had heard the rights of the question, without any striving for effect.

"Shure, people likes ye because ye like thim," said Mrs. Maloney, who was perfectly certain that one day Pete was going to have a place in the courthouse.

"Yes, I do like them," he answered.

Plowing, plowing, plowing; firm hand and straight furrow and laughing over the roots, he continued to cultivate the field which was one day to bear some kind of harvest.

"I'm dished!" was the way Willy Sweetser put the situation after his witness Gudger had escaped, as he sank limply into a chair in Dexter's library. "Yes! But that's no way to talk. It's not that a big damage suit would bankrupt me, and it would, but it's being beaten by the Gold

Pig. It's being shown up wrong when everybody on the inside knows he is guilty—wrong because I can't prove this one point.

"Of course," Willy went on, "if I had the money I could trace the man and buy him back. That's what it amounts to. I haven't the money. And now what do you suppose that the Gold Pig has been doing? You know how he tried to break up my newsboy battalion and how the little bricks stuck to me. Well, he's working through their parents, even evicting widowed mothers for non-payment of rent. I promote him. He's + 150 son of a gun! He's got Boss Birch on his side, because the Boss thinks I'm dished and the Boss is in the same boat with him on this deal. But I'm not! I'll show 'em yet!" he cried defiantly, his voice high pitched, while his whole frame trembled with anger and desperation.

"Willy, will you let me take the case?" the Big Fellow asked.

"And I'd like to help," Theodore Dexter added, firmly.

Willy drummed the chair arm with nervous fingers and scowled in thought.

"Big, you're another kind of lawyer. You don't know this gang I'm dealing with."

"I know a little about them, Willy, and I'm quite a hand for studying," he answered, confidently.

"I can't prove anything, Big. It's no case without Gudger. And yet if Colonel Walker or Brooks would tell the truth, they'd be better than

Gudger—but they won't. Of course not! It would put them in jail along with Birch. No, it's no case and no reputation for you."

This brought the Big Fellow to his feet. He was intense as he said:

"Confound the reputation! I'm your friend."

"Old Big! There is none like you! When you speak that way it's settled. We'll make or break together in this case. We'll get a breathing space, anyway. With all these books you've studied you ought to be a wonder at the 'law's delays.' "

The Big Fellow stiffened.

"No! For immediate trial—as if we were confident," he said, quietly. "Immediate! Right does not wait on the law's delays."

"Yes, Big, but the cashier's office," Willy returned, slowly. Then he saw what he thought was the Big Fellow's point and sprang to his feet, color back in the pale face, which lighted with its old-time volatile energy. "Yes! Of course! Great guns! You're a better newspaper man than I am! I'll spread on this to-morrow! I'll say we have Byng where we want him! We accuse him! He sues! Let him be heard—the sooner the better! Shall I bluff it that strong? "

"You can't make it too strong, Willy, and be sure of your facts," and he gripped Willy's shoulders till Willy's bones ached. "Not too strong! Leave the rest to me. I want a chance to study John Byng and to beat him! "

Willy felt almost afraid of the Big Fellow, he seemed so rigid in look, in manner, and in body.

“ I’m always seeing new sides to you. And your eyes never laugh, do they, Big? They’re always calm and kind.”

Willy’s did laugh, and they could storm and sparkle and flash and smile. Now they snapped with the daring of a man who fights for his kingdom with a show of bayonets of painted lath.

The Big Fellow was in command. Without any apparent consciousness of Dexter’s presence he paced back and forth, back and forth, at intervals shooting out his right arm as if he had the enemy bodily incarnated before him. Uncle Theodore pulled a chair out of the way to make the course free and he would not have been surprised to see the giant go through the wall, leaving a hole that would have silhouetted his figure.

“ I’d like to see Colonel Walker when he’s subpoenaed,” Big said, when he stopped pacing, and broke into a laugh. “ Here I am,” he went on, taking another turn up and down the room, “ with my one ambition to be a judge and I’m to defeat the law—if I can! I believe it is right for Willy and against Byng—by the thousand books I do! ”

“ So you laugh about it? ” Uncle Theodore interjected.

“ I usually do laugh when anything comes hard. Then is the time to extract the humor of the situation, if there is any,” was the only explanation the Big Fellow could offer of his action.

“ So he wants to be a judge! ” thought Dexter, who was the second beside the principal to be in

the secret. Confidentially he told it to Willy, making a third. Uncle Theodore was inclined to think that the Big Fellow was fitted for a career more active than that of the bench, although he could not definitely fix in his mind what this should be. The ambition of his disciple had once been his own, in which he had failed because he would not play the kind of politics which chose the judges of that section; and he was resolved that fulfilment this time must come for the sake of the judiciary of that State, the thousand books, and all that he held dear.

When Byng, who had employed the "best counsel in the State," heard the names of the lawyers for the defense he languidly—for languor was his favorite affectation—asked Mr. Trennet why Sweetser had not retained a bishop and a college dean, a joke over which Mr. Trennet rubbed his hands most unctuously. *The Sentinel* kept up its bombardment with, "Three weeks and two days to the trial!" at the head of the editorial columns one morning; "Three weeks and one day till the public hears the truth!" the next.

Byng was equally impatient that the "new school of journalism" should be brought to the bar; but knowing Willy's resourcefulness, he was most puzzled to hear from his detectives that no effort had been made to recover the one essential witness, who was enjoying himself in Europe with a paid companion.

Willy, with true fatalism and trust in his friend, asked his counsel no questions. When he heard that no witnesses had been subpoenaed for the defense on the very day before the trial, he only answered that he was not a lawyer; and he was busy trying to pay *The Sentinel's* bills, was that businesslike, intense, fighting hummer of a man.

As minutely as if he were intending to write a two-column biography called "The True Life of John Byng," the Big Fellow was studying the Gold Pig's career. Out of his prodigious memory he could recite many features wholly forgotten or unknown, with names and dates, as he paced to and fro in Dexter's library outlining his campaign, while Uncle Theodore, who had been doing some detective work on his own account, listened and approved.

"But nothing about any past matters will be allowed. That's against all law, isn't it?" Byng asked his lawyers more than once when the Big Fellow's inquiries came to his ears. "They must stick to the charge and prove it!"

"Of course!" the best counsel in the State repeatedly told him. "Anything else is wholly irrelevant and will be disallowed. Probably they are getting up a history for a general vindication of their attacks on you after losing their case;" in which the best counsel in the State, being notably matter-of-fact, had no thought of being satirical.

Despite these assurances, Byng did not like

these repeated reminders that he had a record. And Harden was no fool; if he were, Sweetser was not. What had they up their sleeves?

The evening before the trial Uncle Theodore came in rather later than usual and seemed most pleased with himself.

“I’ve a notion to tell you something,” he said to the Big Fellow. “But I won’t! No, I won’t! And how do you think you’re coming out with that case with no proof?” he asked, teasingly.

“I’m going to win,” was all the Big Fellow would say. He was more grim than cheerful.

They went to court together, and by premeditation on Big’s part they were barely on time. The spectators’ benches were crowded and among the best counsel in the State was Ramsdell, whom we met in Poverty Row. Two of the three witnesses which the defense had subpoenaed and without warning, lest they go out of town, were already present and these were Colonel Walker and Brooks, the banker, both of whom had been in the deal with Byng where the bribery was charged.

“You aren’t going to ‘split’ on me?” Byng, thrown off his languor, whispered anxiously to Brooks.

“No!” was the growl. “I don’t know what we’re here for.”

“They’ve been packing the courtroom on us,” said Byng.

“Have they?” whinnied Colonel Walker. Then

he turned to Willy: "That lot of boys there's your newsboy battalion, ain't it?" he asked.

"Yes. I didn't know they were coming. And that bunch around the man with the touseled hair are *Sentinel* reporters and editors. It's pretty good of 'em to be out so early when they have to go to bed so late. And—yes, there's Jimmy Smith, the foreman of the pressroom, and the whole bunch of pressroom folks and printers. The unions 've turned out for me. I tell you, Colonel," and Willy's expressive eyes grew moist, "a thing like that makes a man glad he plays the game."

Put other men in the same position and let them say the same thing, and Colonel Walker asked himself if he would have considered their surprise genuine. He did believe Willy. There was no question that Willy was as honest a little lunatic, he thought, as ever set off fireworks or fired a gun without knowing that it was loaded.

"Any of Byng's reporters and pressmen here?" the Colonel asked.

"I don't think so."

"You bet there aren't!" he thought, "not from affection!"

The rest of the crowd, from many walks of life, knew Jim Harden as an amiable, big, good-natured, sensible man whom they liked. He was going to try a great case and they had come to hear him.

"Suppose any that aren't your friends

are that damned politician's?" the Colonel pursued.

"Yes, I judge so. Pete Maloney's on hand, big as life."

Perhaps the Big Fellow, who had told Willy not to wait on him, made use of a sense of the dramatic on this occasion. Just as the Judge was taking the bench he entered the courtroom, erect as he always was and cheerful, but with a certain manner of serene confidence, as if he had only to pick the prize off the table and take it home. Under his arm was a bundle of papers, which he held in one hand while he tapped them with the other as he told Colonel Walker and Brooks, with whom he had not spoken a word about the case although he had subpoenaed them, that he would detain them only a few minutes.

"Come, now, what is it all about?" whispered Colonel Walker, ingratiatingly.

"A suit for libel," Big answered, benignly, leaving the Colonel no wiser.

Byng's counsel was none the less puzzled when Ramsdell remarked, half to himself:

"Look at Big's eyes! There's something behind this!"

"Hello, Ramsdell!" said the attorney for the defense as he took his seat. "You seem to be on all the big things these days."

"And it's so rare for you to be at a trial except to report it that we are all interested," Ramsdell retorted.

Just before the case was called Boss Birch

came in. He gave the Big Fellow a sharp glance and shot one that was fairly savage to Uncle Theodore, who smiled as he nodded pleasantly.

Byng's counsel presented that copy of *The Sentinel* in evidence of the libel and they called Byng to the stand to state the damage his name and business had suffered. Then the Big Fellow rose to cross-examine the witness. Everybody was watching him except Uncle Theodore, who was watching the Judge. Objection after objection, with the best counsel in the State continually on their feet, was sustained; while Big kept on showing that Byng had not much character to damage and three or four times he caught the Judge, an amiable, watery-blue-eyed man, in a way that made the Judge blush.

That attorney for the defense was a very pillar of Olympian assurance. He would glance knowingly toward Colonel Walker and Brooks and Birch in a manner that said: "We're going to explode something pretty soon under this Byng, aren't we?" Must it be confessed that he was bluffing to save a friend—and in the name of the moral law? He had no evidence, but he had hopes with the jury. He was building his case, in want of specifications, on the truth that existed in everybody's mind. No doubt he was ashamed of himself afterward. All the time he kept looking at that stage bundle of papers. Coming to a charge of perjury he said softly so that only Byng and the jury could hear: "*This one was dis-*

proved," as if he had a whole sheaf of charges that were not.

Byng was most professionally good-natured and indifferent in his answers. "He lies as innocently as a babe takes milk," as Colonel Walker once said. His florid face, his neat moustache and elegant dress, with a false white vest inside his waistcoat, a family crest ring and large emerald scarf pin bore out his manner. But the Big Fellow's remark, "*This one* was disproved," with the telling accent haunted him.

Leading up, question by question, the Big Fellow no longer looked at Judge or jury. He had a stature besides inches which impressed all. It was that intangible atmospheric effect that moral stature alone will produce. Byng still simulated languor, while his nails were pressed against the chair arm and he showed his teeth more and more with his answers.

With occasional short steps—yet regularly timed, it seemed to Byng—the Big Fellow approached the witness. Still that Jovelike smile and the grey eyes not letting Byng's look away from them! Byng felt that this man was only playing with him yet. He had some piece of truth unrevealed behind his steady gaze, and presently Eig, come to the question of the bribe, summed up everything in his:

"Did you or did you not?"

Byng hesitated when he should have been most prompt. For the rest of his life he was to wonder why he did.

“ Did you or did you not? ”

What was in that pile of papers? What if, to use an inelegant expression out of keeping with one who dressed so elegantly, Walker or Brooks should “ split ” on him? Being the plaintiff, his lawyers could not help him with the excuse that the witness need not incriminate himself. It was for Byng to speak and his delay made a silence, taut and quivering, which was broken by a crackling, whinnying voice of nasal satire from Colonel Walker:

“ Coming harder’n usual, ain’t it, Byng? ”

Ramsdell, the quickest of the plaintiff’s attorneys, sprang to his feet and seized his strategic opportunity by demanding a new trial; but Byng, stepping down from the witness stand, stopped him:

“ We have had enough! ” he said, with his languid ease returning. “ I have no desire to proceed any further against a fellow newspaper owner; ” and he felt as relieved as if he had escaped from prison, where he well knew he belonged—but not more relieved than Boss Birch.

So the case was dismissed and the victory was with the humanities and the thousand books over the books of precedent. When the Judge left the bench, Willy, with a spring, threw his arms around Big’s neck.

“ You old Olympus! I owe all to you! ” he cried.

“ I’ve been doing my best for the best citizen *of this town*, ” answered Big, and he lifted Willy

onto a table and shook him. "Yes, the best citizen of this town!" he repeated; and whispered: "I did it all on the guilt in their minds, and I found a wicked pleasure in it!"

Byng and his counsel and the Boss and Brooks had already gone; but Uncle Theodore and Pete Maloney and, yes, Colonel Walker, also, had remained.

"Thank you, Colonel! I knew you were at heart a thoroughbred!" Willy told him.

"I've always liked you, you little lunatic!" admitted the Colonel, "and I've told you before that I'm the most public-spirited man in my town, with a lot of jackals like Byng on my back. I guess you'll put him where he belongs after this." There was something else he said to himself on his way home, which might be quoted here: "Damn politician! Wasn't I right when I wanted a popular lawyer? Look at the way he did it!"

"Ye divil, ye!" said Pete Maloney to the Big Fellow.

"You did pretty well, but I don't want you to play this kind of game often," said Theodore Dexter.

"What was that thing you were going to tell me?" Big asked.

"I'll not now. Boss Birch is the only one that will ever know," was the answer.

With Booth of the touseled hair bareheaded and leading, the reporters and pressmen unhitched the horses from a cab and drew Willy in

triumph through the streets, with the newsboy battalion acting as escort.

“Big swatted the Philistines a hard one, to-day,” Willy telegraphed home; and prided himself on a Biblical reference that his father would understand. “Read the full report in to-morrow’s *Sentinel*,” he added, instinctively.

XVI

EXIT THE TWO BRAIDS

AS distances go by train, the city was not far from Bolton and the Big Fellow had made the journey many times before John Byng felt the weight of the thousand books. These home-comings were the milestones along the furrow's way, when he had sympathy from those whose sympathy was most dear. The first one came on a court holiday in mid-October, soon after he had begun his studies with Theodore Dexter, when the reddening leaves had their warning of a season's end from breaths of wind that sent them flying and the tyrant sun of summer was a genial servitor, welcome on field, road, and porch.

Miss Two Braids made herself a reception committee of one, with Pam as her chief assistant, which was more courteous to him than to state the bare truth that he was the only assistant. Her conceits met with but mild approval from Aunt Julia, who had passing minutes of skepticism about that French and Irish blood, for which, of course, she knew that Ellen was not to blame.

Mrs. Hobber frequently expressed the opinion to all her friends, "between you and me, not that I'd say it generally, bein' in the same

church, I'm afraid they're goin' to have a drefle harum-scarum girl over at the Harden house." This apostle of worry was unable to be present on the great occasion of Big's return, as she had to can pears—"and somebody's got to work if we ain't goin' to the poorhouse." But Hiram would not have missed the treat for the price of his winter wood-pile, as he said. He was the one highly honored guest chosen by our mistress of ceremonies.

"I ain't a-losin' any sleep," said Mr. Hobber. "All I've got to do now is to draw my *entrest* on my investment."

Ellen had the flag out over the porch. Pam had raked the lawn clean of every leaf and put fresh gravel on the path. When they heard the train Liz, the new cow, whose style of beauty appealed to Pam "kase spotted cows looked so purty standin' in de patches of sunlight under de trees," was led forth to her appointed place in front of the porch. Miss Two Braids had not much to work with, but she made the most of what she had. Undisturbed by the ribbons on her horns and a string of maple leaves around her neck, Liz chewed her cud on the approach of the capitalist who had pulled off a big thing on the Roman colonies, while Miss Two Braids was most solemn as she began a speech of her own composition:

"Great hero," she read from manuscript, "it is fitting that when you return from your trials an address of welcome be made. Ahem!" (Which we fear was in the manner of the pastor of their

church.) “ This quiet home saw you depart for battle and it has watched your career with devouring interest.” (She was uncertain about “ devouring,” but allowed it to go as it sounded very oratorical.) “ You went without flags flying, in the stern determination to win, and in honor of your victory we present you with the freedom of our porch.”

“ I read about the freedom of the city in a book and it seemed just to fit the occasion,” she said, in an aside, as she gave Big the key to the front door. At this stage there was a commotion. Mr. Hobber, who had been “ trying to do all my laffin’ on the inside,” had slipped the leg of his chair off the porch floor, but he recovered himself promptly.

“ Great hero,” Miss Two Braids proceeded from that set speech (the kind given out the day beforehand to the reporters), “ we of the quiet home know, as no one else can, that you are no dreamer, but a man of this earth and practical. When you set out the world to conquer we had no cow and no lawn mower and now we have both. In honor of which we decorate you,” and she slipped a wreath of asters over Big’s head. “ Behold the reward of your efforts! Behold Elizabeth herself, showing her gratitude for the home you gave her! Behold this faithful old friend, Epaminanidad, spelled with two d’s and not as in Thebes of ancient days, who has been true to his promise! ”

This was Pam’s cue, according to the stage mis-

tress's instructions. Out of his pocket came a little tin box with the one dollar and sixty-seven cents which he had already saved from selling milk to the neighbors.

"Didn' I tell yo' I had a business haid? Yose gotter keep it, yo' has," said he. "Dat was de bargain."

So Big made an end of argument by taking the box.

"Speech from the hero!" cried Miss Two Braids.

"Speech! Speech! Speech!" all present were calling together, as they had been told to do. And, yes, it was all most foolish—but what fun for Miss Two Braids!

Big struck a highly dramatic attitude.

"The honorable chairwoman of the reception committee," he began.

"That's me!" put in Miss Two Braids.

"That's I!" corrected Aunt Julia.

"—and Madame Mother and Aunt Julia and Mr. Hobber and Pam," Big proceeded, "well may other heroes envy the luckiest of men! None ever had such a home as this and none ever had so charming a spokeswoman. My efforts have been exaggerated by your affection which made them possible. All I had to do——"

"Was to knock somebody down!" Miss Two Braids interjected.

"He did not interrupt your speech," Aunt Julia warned her, but in vain.

"Oh, Big, I can't wait! These ceremonies are

too stifling! " Miss Two Braids cried, and sprang into his arms.

" I allus said he'd do it jes' as easy," said Pam.

" I knew character when I met it," said Hiram Hobber.

And everyone was speaking at once, while he had eyes only for Madame Mother. It was their day and his. No triumph ever quite equaled this over poverty—this triumph of bread-winning. With his growing income he could now make them all more comfortable.

Among his home-comings, holidays of sweet content and peace, Madame Mother discovering each time some new feature of her son's development, were two others, equally memorable and more important, as they concerned the education and the future of Ellen Moore. So this chapter divides itself into three scenes.

On the Big Fellow's return in June of the second summer, Pam was at the gate and the two old ladies framed in the vines of the porch as usual. He had barely asked the question, Where was Miss Two Braids? when she appeared in the doorway and shyly held out her hand.

" Miss Ellen, you should call her, now," corrected Aunt Julia. " Don't you see she's doing her hair up? "

" Yes, I should say so! " he exclaimed.

Ellen blushed and looked at the floor.

" Was it warm on the train, Big? " she asked, primly.

“ I don’t like this at all! ” he said. “ It doesn’t look like you.”

“ But it is I,” with a return to her two-braid manner. “ I leave it to all present. Besides, when you start geometry it’s time to—to do something quite radical, and I’ve put your algebra back in its place. It’s studied ’most to pieces and I’ve forgotten most of what is in it already.”

“ But you have absorbed a habit of logical thought,” he suggested.

“ Have I? ” she asked, archly. “ Have I, do you think, Aunt Julia? Have I, Pam? ”

“ I ain’ got no eddercation. How kin I tell, ’cept by ’pearances, an’ I ’specs dey don’ count nohow in g’ometry! ” and grinning, Pam shuffled away. He had the joke on Miss Ellen now, “ yis, indeedy! ”

A sense the Big Fellow had then, which the hours strengthened, that something had gone out of their old comradeship forever, with no thought on his part or hers if anything would take its place. Otherwise she was the same. After the noonday meal they sat under the shade of the maple—which his father had planted in honor of the son’s birth—and he told her all about his work, the new people he knew, and much that he had never told anybody else.

“ You’re always going to tell me your secrets, aren’t you? ” she asked.

“ Why, yes; that was the bargain, forever.”

“ I wanted it to be,” she answered.

“ It would hurt me intensely if you didn’t. But

that—certainly, that doesn't look right," with a glance at her hair, "not when we hold council, and I'm going to change it back."

"No! You mustn't!"

He laughed at her denials and took the pyramid down. While he braided the dark strands he made a discovery from watching the little, close-set ears, the delicate nostril, the mobile mouth, the oval chin, and the long eyelashes. She was to be not only tall, which he knew before, but she was to be very good-looking. He found himself regretting this, without knowing why.

"You're always to be Miss Two Braids when I am here," he said; and until she left home for further trials in mathematics, she used to wear her hair in that way to please him on his holidays.

When she had all that the local school afforded and she was sixteen, he asked her what next? Was she to study no more?

"Yes, what next, Big? That is it. I've thought of that a lot of late," she responded, with a touch of sadness.

He feared that his beginning had been unhappy, for he had brought to her mind a sense of her dependence. It had never occurred to him before that she might have such a feeling. The thought was depressing.

"There's a school on the Hudson River that's just the thing for you," he proceeded.

She raised her eyelashes, with which she could talk all unconsciously in so many languages, and

in her eyes he saw what she was seeing in imagination, through the books she had read, hundreds of miles away where she had never been.

“ Wouldn’t you like to go? ” he asked.

She did not answer his question, but put one.

“ How could I ever pay you back? ”

“ How? Why, that is not a thing to be discussed.”

“ Yes, it is,” she said, firmly. “ Yes, it is, Big.”

“ Between comrades? Don’t comrades share and share alike? Pay me back? Why, Two Braids, I am paid! I was paid in all the good-by cheer you gave me when I went to the city, paid by all the letters you wrote, paid by the help you gave the folks at home, paid by the very fact of your living. The money is nothing as long as one has it. I’ll be making quite enough—more than enough. Why shouldn’t a big brother out in the world assist a sister who shares his secrets? ”

“ But you’re not my real brother,” she said, seriously, looking at the ground. “ You’re the nearest I have, though,” she added, with her rare smile as she looked at him fondly.

“ Would you like to go? ” he persisted, gently, still at a loss to understand her mood.

“ I will not say,” she admitted. “ But I think I’ll not go,” she declared, inscrutably. Perhaps she dared not confess to herself the longings for a wider life than the old house afforded and the restlessness which, unbidden, found place in her mind.

“ Well, we’ll think it over. We’ll talk it over,” he concluded, to give her time in which to be convinced.

Aunt Julia, when she first heard the proposal, refused to commit herself until she had given it more thought. Madame Mother approved at once. The next night so important a matter was made the subject of a straight-backed-chair occasion by the two old ladies, slightly to the sympathetic amusement of Ellen and Big, who thought it might be discussed in open session at the supper table.

Aunt Julia had not allowed the prospective loss of the “ light of the house ” to influence her at all. Was it better for Ellen? Her fears about the French and Irish blood, after the nature of the school had been fully described, were outweighed by her inborn belief in the value of education. All the members of the council sitting around the parlor lamp were in favor of the proposition except the one most directly concerned.

“ But I could learn to teach or something, couldn’t I? ” Ellen said, finally. “ I’ll go, Big, if I may pay you back all you give me some day. Will you let me? I’ll consent if you will, but not otherwise,” with the mobile mouth firmly set and the chin thrust out.

He agreed to her condition to gain his object, and she matriculated the following autumn at the school on the Hudson River.

BOOK II

XVII

A SCHOOLGIRL'S LETTERS

IN his old age Theodore Dexter had fallen into strange habits. You saw him browsing in bookstalls, not for history of the law, but for sentimental novels of the most widely circulated types.

“ I want to be sure that after their troubles all will be bliss on the last page,” he told the dealers. “ Don’t you give me any with sad endings! I prefer a lowly lover and a lady of birth, though I’ll not press that point. Let it be the other way around, if you choose. But I do insist that I want no young hearts broken.”

In seventy’s cupidity for youth’s happiness he used to read himself to sleep every night, his sympathy running high with the heroine, while he mentally berated the heavy father.

“ My disciple,” he said, “ this is not for you. Don’t you take it up till you’re seventy. It’s a beautiful rest for the mind then. When I think of the number of couples I have seen married and living happily ever afterward in the last year, I feel a cheerful paternity in all the world’s

young. I am become a bubbling well of optimism. And confound the heavy fathers and scheming mothers, I say! ”

That evening Uncle Theodore continued reading until he was convinced that the Lady Gwendolin would get the penniless artist who worshiped her by moonlight.

“ Zounds, villain! We have thee now! ” he said, with a chuckle. Turning out the light and snuggling into the bedclothes, he called to the figure bending by the study lamp: “ Come, my disciple, don't worry about it! You are right. It is the law! ”

“ Good-night, Uncle Theodore! ” said the Judge, a little absently.

“ Night! If I'm not up when you go out, depend on me to walk back with you from the courthouse. Have a good laugh and pace up and down, and remember you serve for twelve years yet, Your Honor. And you're right! You're right! ”

Theodore Dexter's flippancy being something new to him, he made the most of the affectation. From this you must not think that he had suffered any abatement of his mental powers. His comments on the decision *re* the State *vs.* Walker spoke the contrary. Now, for the last time, Judge Harden had gone over the two score of typewritten sheets that Kiddy Witherbee, his secretary, soon to be admitted to the bar himself, had brought that afternoon.

“ You are right! You are right! ” his con-

science told him. Not a comma would he change. Yes, right! But the result would be wrong; and it would be wrong, too, if he made a contrary decision. The statutes were clear. It was not his place to change them.

An Eastern law journal, which came in the day's mail, remarked that it was rare, indeed, that one of his years came to the bench and a noteworthy coincidence that a great test case on which public attention, partisan and highly wrought at the time, was centered, should fall to him. "Judging by the papers and addresses that we have seen," continued the editorial, "few members of our judiciary are better equipped by training and nature for this responsibility or freer from any influences which could lead to an insinuation of bias by the thoughtless."

Gladly would he have foregone the honor and the compliments. They were ashes and exasperation. In this decision he went back to the right of a man to labor and his right to organize, which was ingrained in him by study of the thousand books and by his own experience with the mixed gang. Either he had to take the side of disorder or the side which aided the powerful. There was no middle road of reason and justice, for the law was wrong.

With his gift for philosophy he might have sought relief in a laugh and in pacing the room, as Uncle Theodore had suggested, if his decision had been the only thing on his mind that night. Many other things, both prospective and retro-

spective, pressing for a place in his thoughts, made him wakeful. Had he been one who ever admitted a sense of the occult to a consciousness bound by friendship, logic, and the humanities, he would have wondered if some change in his life or his career were not at hand.

The decision he placed in his leather portfolio, so familiar to all who recognized him as he passed along the street with his happy "Howdy do's" and his interest in how everyone was prospering. He sank deep into his chair, looking at the calendar which he did not see and musing. At length he rose to go to a cabinet where he kept his papers, and on the way was struck by his own reflection in a mirror at the other end of the room.

An unbiased eye would have seen one erect and boyish for his age, although men who talked with him on any serious matter gave him ten years more than he had, which they reduced by fifteen if they saw him at a game or in skylarking mood. Then he seemed even younger than Willy Sweetser, who had that juvenile type of face which time marks with fine wrinkles around the eyes. Only for a second did Big survey himself, before he turned away with mixed feelings of sheepishness and doubt and unlocked a drawer, out of which he took four bundles of letters, one for each year that Ellen had been at school.

How well he knew them! What a fresh pleasure it was to go through them again! The first was written from the train; the next briefly announced her arrival at the school, and the next

was a long one describing that new world of people and manners which "your goodness has opened to me." From this he imbibed the very joy of living and he sensed the grace and innocent abandon of freedom from the restraint at home which had been so gentle and kind that she never resented it.

He ran through all of the letters, nodding to the contents of one as to a passing friend, but reading every word of another, all contributing a part to that chronicle known only to him. But Aunt Julia knew enough to cause many a thought of the French and Irish blood, which she fully believed had certain mercurial qualities not to be found elsewhere. A milestone without directions to the Judge was the last signature of the girlish Portia before she became Ellen altogether.

His summer holidays had been spent at home. He and Ellen had played tennis and tramped the fields, and in his delight of her growth to a broader if no more compelling charm, he had compared the living girl with the girl of the schoolgirl hand.

"Another secret!" she begins one letter. "I tell you everything, Big. I don't think it's sinful to keep it from Aunt Julia when she just wouldn't understand." This part was honey dripping to him. It appealed to the only sense of egoism he had: He liked to have a special place in her existence.

She had been "found" in her studies more than once—not in music or drawing or literature,

—and then had sat up all night with a towel around her head and taught the tortoises seemingly that the rabbit had a chance in the race. He liked her the better for this; far better than if she had been prim and correct and Number One in her class. After all, she was Miss Two Braids, who always had too many thoughts of her own to learn textbooks by rote.

“ I’m having such a good time that I don’t stop to think that I owe you for it all,” she writes frequently, or to that effect. “ How am I ever going to pay you! ” She could teach, anyway, she concluded—“ at least, abc’s, but not ‘ math ’! ”

He never sent her a check without being happier the whole day for this piece of monthly routine. Why shouldn’t he pay her way when his salary was larger than he could possibly use? he asked her; though, truth to tell, he did manage in his generous way to spend it all. And he forbade any mention of the subject again.

“ I may not mention it, Big, but I shall think of it,” she answered; and this hurt him.

He was fondest of her own side of the controversy when she was suspended and threatened with expulsion for a prank. “ I wouldn’t tell who did it—never! never! never! Not if they threw me in the Hudson I wouldn’t! ” This he had sent to the head of the institution and it served its purpose.

“ She is one of our nicest girls and bright and bubbling over with spirits, and has the fault of being good-looking,” wrote the head of the insti-

tution. Evidently she took the Judge for some elderly guardian, a misconception that displeased him. But "the fault of being good-looking"—the fault! Big pondered over that.

To come to the last letter. The aroma of June flowers and the joy of classes over and wonder about a future unsettled were here; and some fireflies and some splintered lightning. By this time she was already back in Bolton, he knew, and in two days he was going home for a holiday, to find her, for the first time, no longer a schoolgirl.

"Have you ridden in automobiles yet, Big? Not fast! Not on such roads as they have on the Hudson," she wrote. "Ned Walker took us out yesterday in his French machine. . . . I told you that he is staying with the Whittleseys" (friends of hers whom she had mentioned), "didn't I? . . . I think we went fifty miles an hour. . . . The Whittleseys have asked me to visit them in Maine this summer. . . . Ned Walker is thirty, but he doesn't look it." ("And I do, I fear," thought Big.) "Everyone says Ned is much nicer and livelier than when he was younger. . . . I am quite dizzy with all the praise we have been receiving for our senior play. Think of being actor and author, too! I was so scared I don't know how I did anything. . . . I start for home, an alumna, in the morning. What then? Do you remember when you returned, Mister Ninety in Calculus, so many years ago?" ("Not so many!" mused Big.) "And how Colonel Walker surprised us? Why, he was a regular

hobgoblin to me! And how stiff we sat in our chairs! ”

She concealed nothing from her friend—yes, her friend, exactly her friend, he feared. When he folded the letters and put them together, certain sentences were quite as clear in their chirography as if they were before his eyes. He knew just on what part of the page each one began.

“ Folly ! ” he thought; but not as if folly were a thing to be dismissed. He clung to it.

XVIII

THE STRAIGHT LINE'S WAY

IT was a joke of the Judge's that his personal political machine consisted solely of the Maloneys and Kiddy Witherbee. Mrs. Maloney insisted that Pete ought to give up his clay pipe except at home.

“ Ain't he ashamed of ye, him the gr-reat man that he is, an' yersilf, ye ingrate, a-shlippin' out into th' corrydoors to puff at a dudeen? ”

Pete took a different view.

“ ‘ Shure, it's natcheral ye look,’ he says to me. ‘ Didn't we both wur-rk on the mixed gang t'gither an' didn't the two of us lick all Italy? ’ says I t' him. ‘ That we did! ’ says he to me.”

Some solace, however, Mrs. Maloney's new sense of dignity found in Pete's little “ side-board ” whiskers, silky white and always brushed forward, giving him the look of a fine old blade of Irish aristocracy.

“ You're good for sore eyes always, Pete,” the Judge had said, as Pete opened the door for him to enter his chambers the next morning.

He thought of the first time he had met Pete and of the right of a man to earn all he could and the right of union they had established on

the mixed gang. Whatever the public thought, Pete believed in him; and so did Theodore Dexter. What did Ramsdell, the leader of the counsel for Walker, believe in? In his client, right or wrong; in the aristocracy of intellect.

It would have been so easy for the Big Fellow to have made his name popular throughout the country; so easy for him to interpolate an appeal to the passion of the hour in that decision! If he had, he would have put his own private opinion above the law, which is the first step toward making the law the will of whomsoever shall be in power to interpret it. He was to be praised by those with whom he had no sympathy; to be censured by those with whom he had all sympathy.

The two score of typewritten pages were handed to the clerk, according to form, and the news was sent ticking over the wires to the ends of the land. On the front page of an evening radical paper, in scare headlines of angry censure, the Judge and Uncle Theodore saw the first result when they left the courthouse that afternoon. As they were walking homeward they met Colonel Walker and Ned, in a new French machine.

“Howdy, Mr. Dexter! Howdy, Judge! Ned here’s trying to get me to give up the buggy for this new-fangled omnibus from Paris!” said the Colonel, gleefully. “Well, Judge,” he added, as he shook hands, “I take it all back. Blood will tell. I might have known that when you came to the crux you’d be on the right side. Never

mind what the crowd says. You've got the brains of this town on your side—and intelligence rules. Want you to come up to that place of ours in the country some day. Only ten miles from your old home."

Praise for the water that grinds your grist and floods the other fellow's farm; praise for what had been an axiomatic rendering of a statute; praise, human and partisan, sounded peculiarly blatant to the Big Fellow at this time.

"It was not for you or them or any class," he answered. "And I will say, as a citizen off the bench, that the law is wrong. I would vote as a citizen for its repeal."

This did not disturb the Colonel. He had the bird in his hand, clever old hunter.

"Well, have it your way—any way to please you. Giddap! Yes, turn her on or whatever you say, Ned. Good-day, Judge. I never could understand him, damn politician!" he resumed to Ned.

"I understand him!" said Ned. "It's pride—and pride deserves respect." Ned had a good deal of pride, himself.

Meanwhile, Theodore Dexter looked skyward and dropped into parable.

"Once a crooked line and a straight line started traveling," he said to his disciple. "The crooked line went around hills and never missed any orchards. The straight line kept on plowing. Whenever the crooked line met the straight line it said: 'You're on the right road.' When

the straight line would not follow, it said: 'You're queer.' "

"And when they got to the journey's end—what then?" asked Big.

"Probably they both had a good time, but the straight line had turned a lot of sod and shown the shortest way to those who were to follow."

Yet the Big Fellow was in poor mood for philosophy. He failed to respond to Uncle Theodore's quips. If he were not a judge, he was thinking, he would lead a movement to change this law.

They were hardly back to their rooms before Willy Sweetser came in, after ascending the stairs two steps at a time, and began, breathlessly:

"Of course, I couldn't ask you what the decision was to be before you gave it out, but I did take it for granted that the thousand books would get it over the fifty. I tell you, Big, you've broken all the crockery and the apple cart is floating down stream with the harness over the donkey's ears and the old lady sitting in a squash of fresh-laid eggs!"

"Now, Willy," said the Big Fellow, contemplatively, as if taking a new measure of an old friend, "you surprise me!"

"Surprise you! Well—of all the——"

"Yes. I had to follow the law and I thought this was just the time you would be busy in your department. It is with the people to change the law, and I pray that they will at once."

No idea ever came a-glimmering to Willy. If

it entered at all, it was on a sun ray with the sash thrown wide open.

“ Kick me! Just kick me! And I call myself a newspaper man! We’ll change that law! ” Willy danced on his tiptoes. “ I’ve got it! ” he shouted. “ I’ll have every member of the State legislature—yes, I’ll have the Governor on record before the morning! And—and wouldn’t it be nuts to have old Boss Birch, too! ”

“ I’ll get Birch, ” put in Uncle Theodore.

“ You? ”

“ Yes. Just leave it to me. The Boss and I have known each other for forty years. There’s been more between us than anyone could guess. ”

“ Well, Uncle Theodore, if you get a signed statement from him, ” Willy cried, “ I’ll—I’ll invite you to dinner at Jerry’s ”—knowing that Uncle Theodore had everything in the world his simple tastes wanted—“ and I’m off! Oh, joy! joy! ”

But he stuck his head through the doorway after he had shot out, his eyes popping with another idea:

“ Look here! We’ll make a new law! Can’t we frame one that’s right? I’ll slam it on the front page—heavy type! Governor’s statement on one side, the Boss’s on the other! ”

“ Yes, ” answered Uncle Theodore, “ my disciple will make one in a quarter of the verbiage of the present law, so tight a thousand Ramsdells couldn’t drive a needle through it! ”

“Bully! bully! Thousand Ramsdells and one needle! I’ll put that in an editorial! The apple cart’s all right! Hear the donkey’s bells a-jingling in the main street and the old lady with a ribbon on her whip is driving at a trot, the first to reach market!”

From the sounds on the stairs Willy must have touched the second flight about three times before he reached the first landing. He could barely have arrived in his office when the Judge’s telephone bell rang.

“H’lo, Big!” came that strident, nervous voice. “Say, could you write that law right quick? That’s something concrete to work with. When any of these stick-in-the-throat, phlegmy legislators begin to talk investigation and discussion we’ll chuck it right at ’em and say, ‘Here’s your law!’”

“All right! In half an hour!” the Judge answered.

“Bully, old Big! I’ll send a boy over. He won’t knock or anything to disturb you, but, Mr. Jovial Olympus, when you’re ready he’ll be Mr. Marathon Mercury waiting right outside the door to come on the run.”

Meanwhile, Theodore Dexter had been taking an envelope out of his safe. He was whistling to himself as jubilantly as if never a young heart in all the world had been broken.

“I’m going to enjoy this little talk of mine with the Boss more than ‘Araminta’s Hope’—and that was a specially good one,” he said.

“ When I put this letter in the safe five years ago I thought I’d feel different when I took it out than I do. Time softens you. Put the perspective of time in your mind and you are a philosopher.”

“ And philosophy? Does it accomplish so much in the world? ” asked the Judge. “ Look at Willy! ”

“ A prince of philosophers! Consider him well, my disciple, should you ever become a man of action. The courage to make mistakes, the facility of readily forgetting them as he rushes on to fresh battles! And the power of getting a philosopher on his staff! But go on with your law.”

That law the Big Fellow had written many times in imagination. With the positive period of the straight line’s end he punctuated it. The refined product of all his study, of all the plowing of his career he passed to his patron, who read the lines slowly.

“ You’ll do! ” said the patron, softly.

We may well follow Uncle Theodore and his letter to the room over a saloon in the waterfront district. Boss Birch’s character was too firmly fixed on his leathern face for him to show any surprise over the nature of his caller’s errand. In the adjoining room, where the city’s inner history was made with a closed door, their conference was held, with the Boss at a small, flat-topped desk and Theodore Dexter in a chair beside him.

“ Well, come pay-day and what's your price? ” the Boss asked, a cigar in his mouth.

“ An act for the public welfare, ” said Dexter.

They all began that way, especially reformers. The Boss smiled sardonically. As Dexter took an envelope from his pocket the Boss's eyes grew greedy for that which had cost him a million dollars, as he often told himself. When he had been on the point of some bold action, a word from Theodore Dexter by mail, or “ I hope you're not going as far as the papers report ” in his ear, made him hesitate.

“ Well, that taught me a lesson never to write letters. What is your price? ” he repeated.

“ Just that you say publicly over your name that you will support the passage of this law with all your influence—a statement in your own hand. ”

The Boss read the law slowly and thoughtfully.

“ It's so plain I can understand it myself, ” he asseverated through the narrow opening between his teeth. He took out his cigar only to listen, never when he talked. With a stub pen, in a scrawling hand he wrote: “ I will work to pass this law, and any man that's a friend of mine will. (Signed) Tom Birch. ”

“ That has the true ring, Boss, which characterizes a leader of men! ” said Dexter.

“ I don't slop over much, as a rule, ” he returned, as he seized the letter. Without even looking at the contents he began tearing it into strips.

“The Hummer’s at the bottom of this, ain’t he?” he asked.

“Partly.”

“Knew it. Count on that little he-devil!” Strip by strip he kept on tearing. “D’ye ever hear,” he continued, warming with the joy of having that damning evidence in his power, “what he said when I offered to run him for Mayor this last time? ‘Run me for Mayor!’ he says. ‘*Me!*’ jerking it out. ‘I’m in a service! I couldn’t take office! That would make *The Sentinel* a personal organ. I’d be almost as bad as a man who uses his paper to get himself a foreign mission. Then I couldn’t tell everybody everything. No, sir! My work’s cut out. No, sir, Boss, you don’t get a chance to massacre *me!*’”

“Can I help you tear?” the philosopher asked, gently.

“Not by a damned sight! I’ve paid enough for this pleasure to enjoy it alone.”

“What was it Judge Harden said when you tried to run him for Mayor?” Dexter pursued.

“It was an honor he couldn’t refuse. He would be glad to have my support. That’s going to be easy, I thought. I wanted his name. It meant votes. When I began on details he laughed and said he wouldn’t make any promises. The more I talked the more he laughed. And I didn’t have to run him because I could scrape through without him. What’s going to be his future? Always on the bench, I wonder? I wonder! Say, he

didn't have anything to do with this game that brought you here? "

" Yes, partly."

" I thought so. Powder and shell together. Fireworks and law."

Here the Boss gathered up all the little squares, triangles, and polygons of paper from the desk and put them in his pocket.

" What I would like to know," he said, " is why, when you had this right in court the day of the Sweetser-Byng case, you didn't use it? "

" Possibly I wanted to see if my disciple could win without it. I enjoyed a test of character. If he couldn't have won, I was going to save Willy and the future that I saw in his single-hearted madness. Possibly I saw good in you, Boss, and in Colonel Walker and I didn't want to drag you into the same class with John Byng."

" Thank you. I wouldn't like that! " the Boss said, savagely. " If I had to go to jail I'd like other company. And you never told the Judge nor anybody? "

" Nobody."

" Thank you for that;" and the glance of the Boss's shrewd eyes spoke his gratitude. " I reckon the way you have of looking around the block," he said, after Dexter had risen, " makes you understand me better'n I understand you. And how do you find it feels to get old? It makes me pretty blue, sometimes."

" I've just the thing to cure you." All the wrinkles of Theodore Dexter's kindly, classic

face were illumined with his lively sense of the humor of his recommendation. "You read about these young hearts. You try 'Araminta's Hope.' I've a lot of young hearts—a whole crate, if you say so—I'll send you. I've read them, too, so that I can guarantee that they have happy endings."

"Well, I'll try it," said the Boss, tilting his cigar and showing his firm teeth in a smile. "That he-devil never lams that polite blackmailer Byng that I don't kind of wish him luck. I guess I'm for him because, for one reason, I guess I'll have to be pretty soon. Suppose this statement of mine will be in *The Sentinel* in the morning. Suppose he's got you reporting for him. He'd get the Pope if he could!"

"Yes, he's pretty busy to-night."

"Well," was the Boss's final word, "you don't charge me so much. That is a good law. I'm glad to be on the band wagon."

And Willy was busy, madly busy, his mind churning. He knew that this was the greatest day of his career, so far. A commander on the field of battle, he stood at his desk sending his directions broadcast. All his reporters were forth on this mission which engrossed him with a thousand details. In the country law offices of legislators telephone bells were tingling; along country roads men were racing in buggies; on trains or vacations State Senators were being traced—all for the sake of that law in a copperplate hand which was like the lettering of some old book,

with a permanency in its every stroke, which lay on Booth's desk in the midst of ephemeral flimsy and copy in scrawling, if plain, reportorial hands.

Time had mapped that State in Willy's mind in more than geography. In every town and village he knew some man who had felt the touch of his mercurial vitality. He knew the qualities of his agent and the qualities of the man his agent was sent to convince.

"You're sure you oughtn't to have tried the Governor first?" Booth asked.

"Yes. I know the Governor. Storm him at ten o'clock. Madden is waiting for the word to charge. He'll have a list of all the names. The Boss's will help. 'There's your legislators' sentiment so strong they didn't even wait on a word from you. Even old Boss Birch is on!'—I hear Madden saying it to the Governor."

Mr. Trennet, Byng's manager, was planning a coup, himself, and he had the word of Byng that he might go ahead.

"*The Sentinel* will have to support the Judge. Sweetser can't go back on his friend," he had reported. "There's a wave of indignation that will let us ride back into favor. I'm spreading with interviews on the injustice done the city and the people by this Walker triumph through Sweetser's judicial hero."

The drift of Byng's policy *The Sentinel* men discovered, and they telephoned in word of it

with the avidity of scouting parties developing an enemy's advance.

"We're willing to let *The Courier* help on the good cause, Booth," said Willy. "How it does work out! How it fits in with all we've been trying to do in this town! Now that we have the chance for a great thing we can get it, because, with old Big advising us, we've never gone off half primed on a thing that looked great when it wasn't."

Booth ran his hand through his touseled hair and could not keep the Governor off his mind. At ten they sent Madden the names of more than half of the State legislators and waited. At ten-thirty, "I've got it!" came over the long distance.

"Bully for you, Madden!" answered the commander-in-chief. "Oh, we're all going to remember this night's work! Now, quick, give us what the Governor said!"

Booth was in a fever of delight.

"It's not time to yell yet," said Willy, "not yet! He's the bell-wether to fifty other legislators."

These men he had located. Someone was waiting at a telegraph wire ready to repeat the Governor's statement to each one of them. All the keys in *The Sentinel's* telegraph room were set clicking.

"Now we have the fireworks—the next thing is to set them off properly!" Willy turned to other features in his plan. Already the multiples

were knitting out the first edition, with two pages blank except for the black lettering:

“ This is Free! Watch for the Second Edition! It Will Have Something Vital to Every Citizen of the State! ”

The regular edition he trebled. Long after midnight he watched the first copy run off, and he and Booth gloated over it. That law in bold type stood between the Governor's and the Boss's statements, followed by the names of more than three-fourths of the State legislators, nailed to the promise to pass the amendment. On the editorial page he had written:

“ The Judge was right! The people are right! They will change the law! ”

He remained watching the big presses at their work in the automatic precision of their thousand parts, and for a time he was unconscious that Theodore Dexter and the Judge were standing by his side.

“ They are yours now, Willy,” said the Big Fellow.

“ They're *ours*—they're the service's! All I get out of it is my automobiles! ” He did like automobiles. They fitted his nature exactly. “ Yes, the automobiles! Let the money go back. It's a service—and I'm hungry as a lean, hairy, old bear in springtime, Big. Here is where '48 and '88 go to Jerry's. I 'phoned him to keep open. It's just ten years since I came on *The Beacon*. You brought me to this, Big! You've made me! You remember what you said that day

out of the window about '88 being a power for good in the world? "

And a power for good at least two of the '88's had been, with the wisdom, the affection, and the experience of a '48 at their call. The bench had risen in the respect of the bar and the people. Industries thrived in that city, which was now overtaking the old rival in population. A public spirit that had a distinct character had been born. Boss Birch was finding that all the people, even his own wards, demanded many things, to which, formerly, they were indifferent. Men were more cheerful and less cynical and they worked with a better will.

Real estate was booming, as Colonel Walker said. This community was no longer known as "a bad newspaper town." Uncle Theodore could see, if others did not, that the result was due to the tone of the daily lesson sent out from *The Sentinel* office for all to read by Willy Sweetser, who was no reformer of academic "isms" gazing skyward, but a merry man of his hour and his day, who loved the explosions. "You can make a good thing just as interesting as a bad one if you know how," he said, "and you don't always have to point a moral with a sigh in order to get a moral result."

While Jerry fed that lean bear, the '88's tried to draw Uncle Theodore on how he had been able to thaw out Boss Birch.

“ That’s between him and me,” said he, with a whimsical sing to his sentences. “ The Boss is mellowing, I think, and I hope to do him a good turn by sending him ‘ Araminta’s Hope.’ He and I may yet form an old men’s club: Object, to keep young hearts from breaking; and you are expected to agitate for a new law, Willy, that will hit the heavy fathers hard! ”

XIX

THE OFFICE SEEKS THE MAN

POOOR Mr. Trennet! There was genuine sympathy for him in the office of *The Sentinel* for he had faithfully served his master's purpose in life. All its interviews and all *The Courier* had to say on the decision were but the echoing cheer of a rival's victory. Its attack on the Judge was an attack on itself, in the mind of thinking men.

When John Byng saw the two papers side by side, he said in disgust that he would get out of the newspaper business—it was not fit for a gentleman—and stick to breweries and traction. When Colonel Walker saw them his feelings were mixed. At first, himself a great commander, he could not restrain his admiration for a general who could accomplish all that Willy Sweetser had in sixteen hours. Then, reading deeper than the headlines, he thought:

“Damn him! Damn politician! He's the man behind it—behind everything! His father's son, but more ballast, more chin. I knew it right from the start.”

This was the last time in this era that he ever used a “damn” as an honorific for the Big Fel

low. In this "damn" there had been a little fondness, which was at an end. Other cases of the State *vs.* Walker were on the calendar. Judge Harden, no passing trouble, now rose to the distinction of an arch enemy. The old Colonel, who loved obstacles and loved a good fight, ate his breakfast with the zest of one planning a new campaign. He might be sixty-five and becoming a bit careless, as he frequently remarked to himself in those days, but let him wake up and he could still set the pace for any of these young fellows who mistook ambition for a knowledge of the game. So let them be warned in time.

Turning over the other pages of *The Sentinel*—which he always read first because "it was so interesting"—he saw in an inside column a dispatch from Washington which told how the government was looking for a Governor for Bar. None of the men asked would accept, and none who offered their services were satisfactory in this extremity. Having read that item twice, the Colonel, after lighting his cigar, concluded that the brand was not depreciating so much as he feared and he ordered another thousand of the same kind.

"Talk about coincidences!" he said, as he rose—for that afternoon he was to spend an hour on the private car of the President, who was passing through the State.

Now, the Islands were much in the public eye in those days. Some said that we got them from destiny and some said from Spain in that little

war in which (one of the original members of Willy's newsboy battalion went up the hill with the Rough Riders.) We cheered our heroes and paid the bills. In certain quarters there was much concern over our moral wickedness in ruling an alien people; in others, only the conviction that we would have to make the best of a bad bargain. But generally we were too busy to bother over details. The Judge thought colonial expansion against our principles, but believed we must not shirk our duty. Theodore Dexter took a stronger view.

"By the thousand books," he said, "from Moses down, we have the right to teach them if a schoolmaster has the right to teach a child! Nothing can be so cowardly as intellectual morality. If we don't believe in our right, then we don't believe in our civilization, and would better start a new one."

Primarily, wouldn't somebody please find a way to keep the Islands quiet? And more particularly that island of Bar? To Colonel Walker, who had never thought of them as anything except a means of more taxation which he would have to assist in paying, they became, for the first time, an appealing entity. He saw a use for them.

With the tongue of experience he spoke into the great man's ear. Do you think he suggested that it would be better if Harden were out of the State? Hardly. He was the felicitous discoverer of the ideal man. Willy Sweetser could not have better sounded the Judge's praises.

“A big fellow!” said the Colonel. “Big in heart and in mind. When he comes into a room with his smile and his handshake he makes friends all around. You may go to him boiling angry and he can send you away pleased, though you didn’t get what you wanted. I confess I don’t quite understand him—no, I don’t. Ne-eh! But I never did admire a man more.”

The President was interested. He had met the Big Fellow once and had heard much of him, and he concluded to make further inquiries.

“He’s the kind that looks all around a subject,” the Colonel continued. “Everybody who sees him says at once: ‘Here’s a big, honest man; what’s his opinion?’ Seems to me, when he began to pour oil on the troubled tropical waters they’d have to go down. Why, he’s big enough to scare the natives with his size and hypnotize ’em with his laugh!”

The Colonel felt quite patriotic—wasn’t it patriotism of a high order to send the Judge out of the State?—as a secretary took a message asking Judge Harden if he would not come to Washington and, as an appointment must soon be made, at his earliest possible convenience.

The Big Fellow received this telegram on the afternoon of the day after the decision. With a shout of astonishment he passed it to Uncle Theodore, who settled deep in his chair and seemed to shrivel when he had read it.

“Don’t ask me,” he said. “That people need the thousand books. Who so fit as you to

carry them? And what shall I do without my disciple? ”

“ I would have to leave the bench,” Big returned, slowly. “ It changes my whole career. It upsets everything.”

“ If that’s the only reason, I doubt if it holds water. You ought not to be a judge, though you are such a good one. You only think you ought.”

“ There you are developing one of the wrinkles in your brain that I don’t understand, Uncle Theodore,” Big responded.

“ The essay! ” exclaimed Uncle Theodore, suddenly reverting to the thing that had brought the two together ten years ago. “ There you said that, with our civilization and our principles, we would be warranted in taking charge of a foreign people only for the purpose of implanting in their minds the character that would enable them to govern themselves.”

“ So we would! ” answered Big. “ I suppose I ought to get out my ‘ long ’ and ‘ high. ’ ” Without any show of enthusiasm he took his dress-suit case down from the closet shelf. “ Anyway, I can hear what the President has to say.” The worst of this surprising thing was that it had come just as he was about to start for home full of other thoughts.

“ You could not well do otherwise.”

However, Willy Sweetser, who came in directly, was not between two opinions. Once he sat on the frock coat and refused to let the Big Fellow go on with his packing. He stormed; he argued;

threw a pillow at Uncle Theodore as a shameful teacher for not spanking his pupil.

“ You, Big, are you out of your senses? ” he roared. “ You, a judge here in this State with twelve years to serve, going out among a lot of chocolate drops that wear a mango leaf on a ring for week days and a frayed palm leaf for Sundays—out there to bury yourself? Here in these big United States is the place to be. Why, those islands aren’t the tail of a dog to us! They aren’t the bob-tail of a fox terrier! They aren’t the hair on the elephant’s tail! ”—which was the bait, for the present, of Willy’s exaggerated similes. “ I’ll ’phone over a telegram to go from the office, saying: ‘ Highly honored, but preferences for the bench.’ ”

He started for the telephone. The Big Fellow grabbed him by the shoulders and set him on the chair, and Willy threatened to kick somebody’s ins if not let alone.

“ I haven’t decided yet. You’ve gobbled bait and line,” the Judge remonstrated.

“ But you will! When you get in the Frocked Presence you will! Well, there’s one thing I can do. I’ll have a few words to say to the President for a confounded meddler! ”

“ I haven’t decided yet,” Big repeated. “ I don’t expect to accept. But courtesy demands that I go to Washington.”

“ And what am I to do without you? ” Willy pleaded.

“ And what am I? ” asked Uncle Theodore,

sinking still deeper into his chair. He would not let himself think of the prospect. "I have just found a new line of young hearts. I will try to be cheerful," he added, with an effort at a smile.

The Big Fellow paused, with his hand on the lid of the dress-suit case:

"And what am I without you, my friends—my friends?" Fondly he looked into their faces. Fondly he looked at the walls of books. "And what without——" but this corollary he did not utter aloud. It was in his mind not to go. For an instant they saw him hesitate before he snapped the clasps.

"It's unlikely; it's out of the question," he said. "I'll have a look 'round in Washington. I'll meet some men I want to know. That's all."

All the way to the station Willy argued. He had an impulse to jump on the train, which he did not act on, though he did on most of his impulses. At every important station came telegrams from him, with, "What am I to do without you?" at the end of every one. "I've looked up the trade of that archipelago of tropical gold bricks and it is less than half this State. Our city's worth the whole lot," he said; and again: "If you want to go into the governing business stay right here where there's something that wears clothes to govern. I'll make you Governor of the State in two years."

To the President he sent a thousand words, the sum of which was that kidnapping valuable public

servants ought to be a felony. "Send a missionary to preach to them and a soldier to convert them," he concluded. It was a mad wire-letter, and so interesting that the whole Cabinet read it as a literary curiosity.

When Big left Washington the next evening, although he could guess none of its difficulties in detail, he understood broadly the uninviting conditions of the task which he was now definitely asked to undertake, at the sacrifice of his career and comfort at home, for the one reason that the office sought the man. The previous Civil Governor had failed miserably, by his own confession. "If you want to bury your reputation and get the fever there is your chance," as a friend in the War Department told Big.

Martial law was the only thing to prevent a continuation of anarchy and massacre, said the army. But the President, ever of a hopeful nature, would not give up his idea of inculcating civil rights at the same time that military measures proceeded. The right man who would work in harmony with the commander of the forces he sought, and would send at once; and he saw that there was one who knew the law and the humanities of the thousand books.

"I want a man in whose blood runs the very spirit of our Constitution," he said.

"You will have my answer in thirty-six hours, Mr. President," responded Big, simply. "I'll think it over on the way and there is someone I wish to consult at home, besides."

Bound for Bolton, he passed the city by. When he started to look through the envelopes of reports and other information, which the Department had prepared for him, he found himself looking out of the car window, where he saw letter pages in a schoolgirl hand.

XX

WHEN A TELEGRAM ARRIVED

THE Harden family was at supper. Pam, who was gravely waiting on table, went to the door when the bell rang.

“Any answer?” the telegraph boy asked.

“Yo’ sit right dar in dat chair,” said Pam, in lordly way, as if several telegraph boys waited on the porch every day, “an’ don’ yo’ git impatient an’ I’ll tell yo’ in due co’sse o’ time if dey is.”

With the care of one drawing up a will he signed his name to the receipt book.

“Mrs. James Harden,” he spelled out, as he laid the yellow envelope on the table in front of Madame Mother.

It must be from Big, everybody thought. Had anything happened to him? Silence prevailed, while Aunt Julia and Ellen made pretense that they were still eating.

“Will you bring my glasses, Pam?” Madame Mother requested.

Pam fidgeted about, looking in one place and another, each being the wrong place.

“In my work-basket, of course, you simpleton!” she told him.

Meanwhile, she held the envelope up to the light. When the glasses were brought she slit it with a fruit knife and opened the sheet deliberately; but at first she did not read the message aloud. Of course not, when it was addressed to the head of the household personally.

She made a movement as if she were going to lay it to one side, still without revealing the contents, and then proceeded to read again, while Pam, standing close behind her chair, lifted first one foot and then the other as if they pricked him.

“Character will tell in the long run,” said Madame Mother, finally, a touch of color, the color of pride, in her cheeks. “We have always had character in our family.”

“But what is it? What is it? May we know?” Ellen could hold her tongue no longer.

“Yis, yo’s e in de light, but we’s plumb in de dark an’ bustin’ with curiosity,” said Pam.

Then she informed them—as if it were nothing to take a Harden off his feet when the head of the nation honors him—of the President’s offer and of Big’s journey to Washington. Ellen was elate with the wonder of the thing. Aunt Julia had an opinion instantly.

“Well, he won’t go—not out among all those savages!” she declared.

“Any answer?” called the boy from the doorway.

“No, dey ain’,” said Pam, on a nod from Madame Mother; but Ellen jumped up from the table.

“ Yes, oh, yes! ” she said. “ I want to send one! I must to splendid old Big! Let’s see—it’s ten words for twenty-five cents—‘ Splendid Big Ninety in Calculus Honorable Court potentate salaams prostrations.’ There, that’s ten and the signature is free. But I can cut out ‘ in ’ and that gives me another word. I’ll make it ‘ hooray ’! ”

Aunt Julia opposed the extravagance.

“ He’ll be here day after to-morrow and you can tell him enough nonsense when he arrives,” she added.

So the telegraph boy departed without an answer. A shade of annoyance on Ellen’s face lasted only long enough for a smile to drive it away. Rebuffed in one direction, her enthusiasm found an outlet in another. Oh, that French and Irish blood!

“ We must inform ourselves! ” she declared. “ We must know all about the island of Bar! But isn’t it like old Big, so simple and good, to be asked by the President to be a potentate! ”

Supper only half eaten, she hurried away. Mr. Hobber she knew was a great reader. Despite Mrs. Hobber’s stubbornly maintained opinion that Ellen was a harum-scarum girl who would elope or do something strange, she and Hiram, out of a common interest in the Big Fellow’s career, had struck up a real and understanding friendship.

“ Well! well! ” drawled Mr. Hobber. “ This is entresting! Come back and let’s talk it over

when you get posted;" and he gave her a pamphlet which he had received under the local Congressman's frank.

From the library of the local doctor were forthcoming a map and a book that had a chapter on Bar; and with these in her arms she went tripping back to the house, reveling in the prospect of an whole evening in the Far East.

"He did not wire me, his partner in secrets," she thought. "No. But he wrote, I know! I'll have a letter from him for my own self to-morrow, with all kinds of details, and I must think what to tell him when he is making up his mind about accepting."

On that map, spread on the sitting-room table, she pointed out the island itself, a dot, which her forefinger tip would completely cover, in the broad Pacific, with its sea routes so many sprays of dotted lines proceeding from the great ports.

"Why don' dey go straight? Why is dey circlin' when yo' don' have to go 'roun' no hills in de ocean?" asked Pam, proposing to inform himself, also.

"Because," Ellen answered, "they cut the curve of the earth, that being the shortest way."

"Dey do, eh?" Pam scanned that flat stretch of blue skeptically. "Well, all I kin say is dat dat air shows de value of an eddercation which don' 'splain nuffin to no one dat ain' got no eddercation."

Ellen forgot Bar for the fraction of a second that it takes to consider what the family would

do without Pam, and then flew back to the realm of speculation.

“Eight thousand miles from San Francisco! Think of it! And a good deal farther from Bolton! Think of Mister Ninety in Calculus, that I bombarded with cherries and who split wood for Mr. Hobber and couldn’t really wash the dishes as fast as I could wipe, traveling so far to a kingdom we never heard of! What a voyage it must be! What revelations!”

“Let us hear something from the book. Won’t you read it?” asked Madame Mother.

Ellen took up the book after another longing glance at the voyage routes in the blue space, “whar de Lawd dropped a li’l hunk o’ yearth fo’ dem Wawyan Islands on His way ’cross to make Asia aftah He done make ’Merica,” as Pam said.

“Capital, Takar. Population, one million,” she began. “A million people! That’s half the population of this State—and Big would rule them all and be President and teacher and boss! What a great, picturesque, far-off thing to do! I am sure he will go!”

“Ellen, I’m afraid a college education has filled your head with romantic notions,” Aunt Julia remonstrated. “I’m sure he *won’t* go, when he’s a Judge with twelve years to serve.”

“That Jimmy and I,” with a trace of accent on the pronoun, “will have to consider,” Madame Mother, who was never stampeded, reminded her sister.

“ ‘Takar has one hundred thousand people, a large public square, with a cathedral and a Presidencia,’ ” Ellen quoted. “ ‘The Presidencia is where Big would live and dispense the law. I wonder if he has a gold chair to sit in and a retinue in yellow silk? ‘A few foreign traders beside the officials and priests form the white population,’ ” she read on. “ ‘Five per cent., mostly in the capital, are mixed blood, who earn their living by their wits, while the natives are the most martial and cunning of any of the Islands.’ And Big will have to master them! It’s good he is a giant. Can’t you see him talking it over with them, guiding them, scolding them, spanking them, maybe? He is big enough to spank them, two at a time.’ ”

“ ‘If dey’s a million of ’em he’d have to have a spankin’ machine,’ ” interjected Pam, who was making a pretense in the background of polishing the silver.

“ ‘That will do, Pam ’ ” (from Madame Mother).

“ ‘Ellen, if you wouldn’t comment so much and read straight ahead we would get the sense better,’ ” said Aunt Julia.

This she did quite obediently, reserving her own thoughts for bed-time, when she lay awake, seeing the Big Fellow land on a sandy beach under the palms, where he received the salutations of a brown populace. How she would like to be present, she thought, on this august occasion! But in the morning she would have a letter from him in that copperplate hand with the

whole story. A letter did come in the morning, addressed to Madame Mother and inside to "All the Folks at Home," and it related at length what the telegram had told them in brief.

Ellen's gayety was a little affected at the breakfast table. She had almost nothing to say about the island of Bar. She was preoccupied with a bargain that she had made one night, sitting on the porch roof—a bargain for keeps. Hadn't he broken it? When such a great thing had come into his life didn't it occur to him to write one word to the partner of his secrets? What did he think—that when that bargain was made she was only a little schoolgirl, who would help to keep things going happily at home—and how hard she had tried to do this!—and now that he was famous and successful she was only a grown-up schoolgirl, to whom he would be kind? He meant the world to her—all the world outside of Bolton—and always had. In world affairs she wanted to be his real counsellor.

Having said the night before that she was going to Stottstown for more books about Bar, she went, and, besides, the journey gave her something to do, when she was finding none too much to occupy her busy nature at home.

"After all that trouble she didn't read them, but goes tramping across the fields," Aunt Julia confided to Madame Mother at tea-time. "I'm afraid Ellen is getting very changeable. I'm almost afraid she is going to be headstrong."

The tramp, at first glum, grew delightful when,

on a new tangent of reasoning, she explained the situation to her own satisfaction and accused herself of selfishness and her usual impulsiveness and thoughtlessness for ever having seen it in any other way. Big was very busy. He had written a hurry note for the general information of the family. But before he decided he would have a long talk with her. Of course he would. They would be quite by themselves for hours, and this thought set her to guessing his questions and planning what her answers would be. When she returned to the house, the argosy of her imagination was bending on full sail in Pacific seas.

“Have you heard, Pam,” she asked him, solemnly, “about the strange thing that happens in the Pacific Ocean when you cross the 180th meridian? You either lose or gain a day. For example, you have two Tuesdays or no Tuesday at all!”

Pam was growing wise to the pitfalls in Far Eastern intelligence.

“Dat ain’ nuffin. Dat’s jes’ as easy—jes’ as easy. Ise often t’ought it was a Sunday when it was a Sat’d day an’ t’ought it was a Monday—speshully when de washin’ was heavy—two days a-runnin’. Yis indeedy!”

MADAME MOTHER DECIDES

WHO gave him his first "stent," anyway? Who told him that his future character rested on the payment of two hundred and forty-eight dollars and fifty cents on time? Hiram Hobber felt a genial proprietorship in the Judge and a partnership in all his fortunes; and he had the luck to board at Stottstown the train which was bringing the Big Fellow home from Washington.

"Not 'spectin' to do any travelin' soon, eh, Judge?" he began, Yankee fashion.

"I don't know yet," was the answer. "It is a long journey."

"Well, you take that heathen job," said Hiram. "I've been readin' up on the subject an' the President ain't sent out nothin' yet but politicians an' perfessors. They're all right in their way—politicians is useful sometimes, an' perfessors is—but it's plain as day they ain't to be mixed; leastwise, not when affairs is pressin'."

"Not when affairs are pressing, hardly," Big admitted. "In quiet times, with plenty of leisure to experiment, it might be worth while, in the hope of finding how many parts professor and how

many parts politician you should mix for an ideal combination."

"Why, you don't want somethin' everybody else has found easy, do you?" asked Hiram, the advocate. "That's where the fun an' glory come in. Yes, sir, you go out an' clean up that heathen job, Judge. You can do it."

Epaminanidad, who was at the station, was allowed to carry the case containing the "high," which the Big Fellow refused, Judge though he was, to wear on any except formal occasions, while he himself carried the bulging dress-suit case. Hiram walked with them as far as the gate. After it was opened Pam began snickering.

"What are you laughing about up in your nose, you humbug?" Big asked, as they started along the path.

"Me! I isn't laffin', 'deed I isn't! Jes' a li'l snuffles cotched from leavin' de winder open las' night—te-he-he!"

In proof that he was not laughing, Pam dropped the hat case and doubled up in a convulsion just as something struck His Honor on the nose.

"Wuss'n she ever was! De mischief in her done kep' right on growin' aftah she stopped growin' herse'f!" said Pam.

With ten years' difference between their ages, Ellen had come home from graduation just ten years after Mister Ninety in Calculus had, and when cherries were ripe. In spirit and in quality she had changed little. At times she was as young as on the day of the first bombardment; at times,

as her schoolmates had said, she could be so wise and sensible that you would never guess her capable of a fanciful senior play. It was a supple figure and slim that Big saw half leaning against the trunk of the old tree, while her eyes, whose spell was always over him, were speaking a dozen kinds of electric defiance as she inquired, in mock solemnity:

“ Shall I aim for the honorable shirt bosom of His Honor or shall I drop one into the brim of the honorable hat? ”

“ Jump, or I come after you! ” he called.

“ Oh, no, not I! ” she returned, in sober calculation. “ The Honorable Court is not good enough on the catch. I would not rumple his dignity. ”

Up he started, the tree shaking with his weight. She slipped to one side, managing her skirts gracefully, and alighted. Then she seized a dangling foot and had him there between ground and limb, helpless.

“ What a position for the Honorable Court to be in! Observe him, Pam! ”

“ Yo’ suttinly done got him! Te-he-he! ” giggled that partisan of the Spartans.

Aunt Julia had left the porch at the inception of the performance.

“ Ellen! ” she called, severely, “ if you went to school in the East one more year I presume you would be walking the fence in a circus rider’s costume! Don’t you know that passing neighbors will see how you are behaving? ”

“ Yes, aunt, the Honorable Court does look ridiculous; ” and she let him down.

“ Ellen! Ellen! ” Aunt Julia repeated, solemnly.

The Big Fellow broke into a peal of joy which startled Madame Mother, who was sitting on the porch, suffering a little from rheumatism. It did not seem quite in keeping with a Judge’s dignity for him to laugh so loud and she hoped that he was not absorbing bad manners from associating with Willy Sweetser. The more important her son grew in the world, the more she was inclined to keep him in hand.

“ You’re bigger than ever, Big, ” declared Ellen, surveying him. “ I believe you are growing again. ”

“ I’m not! I’m not! ” he said, in an assumed voice of stage thunder. This was a sore point with him. He would willingly hear anyone but her speak of his size. “ I haven’t gained a pound in six months. ”

“ Great Heavens! what if you were growing—think what if you were secretly—all unbeknown to yourself! ” She drew in her chin and knitted her brows dolefully. “ How’d we ever know then when you were going to stop? There’s only one thing to do, that’s to measure. ”

“ Ellen! ” (from Aunt Julia).

The old mark, dim but distinguishable, was found under the later growth of vines and she noted that when he put his back against the pillar it was still as straight as the pillar.

“ No, you haven’t altitudinally,” she admitted. “ I suppose it’s longitudinally,” she added, mischievously.

“ Not longitudinally, either—not a bit! ” he returned. “ I’m not so thundering big! No, by the thunders, I’m not! ”

She was measuring her own height, now six inches less than his, which was not so great a difference between a man and a woman, as he reminded her.

“ I’m not so thundering small while you are thundering about it, O Mountain! ” she asserted. “ I’ll be thundered if I am, Mr. Thunderer! ”

“ Ellen, it seems to me that when a young lady reaches the age of twenty-two it’s time——”

“ For tea, aunt. Let me bring it! ”

Aunt Julia shook her head.

“ I don’t know about this higher education for girls. What do you think she did yesterday? She had Mr. and Mrs. Hobber over to tea without asking us! ” (Aunt Julia had never quite approved of Mrs. Hobber, though in later years she took a different view.)

The Judge made no comment on this breach of discipline. He changed the subject with some photographs and government reports, which he took out of his dress-suit case and laid in Madame Mother’s lap.

“ All about that island of Bar! I must telegraph my answer to-night. ”

“ Yes, Jimmy, yes. So these are the people we are to civilize out of hand? ” she asked, taking up

an envelope containing photographs and putting on her spectacles.

“ My! ” said Aunt Julia, looking over her sister’s shoulder at an exhibit marked “ A city type of the Tongals,” by the Anthropological Subdivision, which certainly had no connection with the Textile Subdivision. “ My! I do hope you will teach them enough manners to tuck their shirts in! ”

“ They say it is cooler that way,” Big explained discreetly.

“ It isn’t respectable and decent, whatever it is! ” Aunt Julia averred.

The next was “ A rural type of the Tongals.”

“ Goodness gracious! ” she exclaimed. “ They’ve got almost no clothes on at all! ”

The next was “ A mountain type.”

“ For Heaven’s sake! Here’s a lot with none! There they stand—an whole family—as perfectly unashamed of it as a cat and her kittens! ” Then Aunt Julia looked the other way. “ Ellen mustn’t see this! ” she gasped.

“ Jimmy, you had better put them back in your case and then burn the lot,” Madame Mother said, turning them face downward without further inspection.

“ I hadn’t seen them myself,” he said, obeying. “ Honestly, I hadn’t looked inside that envelope yet.”

“ Well, I hope, Jimmy,” Aunt Julia concluded, “ that if you do go out there you will make the government send at least one pillow case apiece

with a puckering-string for the whole population, and I hope you'll stop the United States being a party to such scandalous——”

There she dropped the subject, as Ellen came with the tea-things. The Big Fellow wanted to assist in passing the cups, but Ellen sent him for a chair for herself instead. Then he sat down on the steps. After a sip, a precise sip, Madame Mother signified by her manner that the family was about to go into straight-back-chair executive session without waiting to light the lamp with the glass standard. Big had intended to have his talk with her after he had spoken with Ellen; and here she was beginning quite as she had when some question about his conduct had arisen in his boyhood.

“Now, Jimmy, as I understand it,” she began, “we have a foundling on our doorstep, and when we decided to take him in and not send him to the foundling home we made ourselves liable to duties which we cannot neglect. We must bring these islanders up to order and civilization and start them right.”

“Yes, Madame Mother, precisely. You have put a big thing as simply as you would a little thing.”

“It is a long way for you to go away from us,” she continued, “a very long way. We like to have you near home.”

“Yes. That's the hard part”—the part of separation from her, Aunt Julia, Uncle Theodore and Willy, and from Ellen, whom he put last in-

terrogatively, as if the weight of decision rested with her.

“ Out there among a lot of savages and fever and flies! ” put in Aunt Julia. “ But he’s your boy, not mine, Martha,” she hastily added, to clear her conscience of any charge of interference.

Madame Mother heeded neither his nor Aunt Julia’s remark, but proceeded along her own straight line of catechism:

“ Your absence we must not consider if the change is for the best. It will not be a promotion for you? ” she asked.

“ No. Hardly, when I have twelve years to serve! No, all my friends—everybody—consider it the contrary.”

“ You did not ask to go? This offer came entirely unsought? ”

“ Entirely! ” the witness on the stand answered.

“ The office does seek the man and the President finds it hard to get good men? ”

“ Well, yes, I’m afraid few nurses who can make a living at home are applying for the foundling. Everyone is saying what a noble thing it is to go and doing his part by urging the other fellows on! ”

Was the mother of the Gracchi as dramatic as the poets make her? Or was she soft-spoken and firm? Did the Spartan woman shout from the doorway for the street to hear her parting message bidding her son to come home with his shield or on it? Or did she say it quietly to him alone?

In both instances we must accept the history of remote hearsay. Madame Mother, we know, gave her head only a slight nod of finality.

“When you have not asked,” she said, “and the President of the United States asks you because he thinks that you can best do this work for your country, I don’t see how you can refuse. It is your duty to go.”

Duty! Duty to any task that came to him was the sum of his character, and love of work and optimism the sum of his strength. Madame Mother had struck home to his conscience! She had made him see the situation in its true light, as he was bound to see it eventually. Now he knew that from the moment the call had come, all the elements in his nature were gathering to send him on this mission to bring into being the dreams of a senior classman’s essay.

Why had he hesitated? Because of Ellen, he knew. Her approval and her advice he wanted. But she was also one to stand for duty, if not in the grey that is supposed to be duty’s favorite color, yet none the less steadfastly in brighter and warmer tones. To Madame Mother he made no answer except the silence which she accepted as assent to her dictum.

“The *Governor* will have another cup, I think, Ellen,” she added, quite settling the matter, there on the front porch in Bolton, as to the governorship of Bar, ten thousand miles away.

Ellen, in the background unobserved, without touching her lips to her tea, had listened in a

tempest of feeling. Not once had he asked her opinion about the greatest thing in life! Why should she expect it? Of what value was the advice of one who had been nearer the foot than the middle of her class? Oh, that French and Irish blood! It is warm, quick, sensitive, proud. She labeled a certain bargain as dead. In swift imagination, as she sat so still, watching Big look up to his mother, she built a new, practical world for Miss Ellen Moore, free from any of the illusions of a fool's paradise. All this she could do—did she not write the senior play and take a leading part?—with no outward expression except a strange brightness of the eyes, which the long lashes hid, and the slightest tremble of the lip for a second, as she poured for the great man who did not consult grown-up schoolgirls whom he had sent to college.

“Four lumps for the Governor! We'll promote him from three!” she said. “And we all drink to the Governor,” she added, after she passed him his cup and raised hers on high. “To the Governor! To the Governor!”

“To the Governor!” said Madame Mother and Aunt Julia, in a mild chorus.

“Pam has yet to hear the news. He must be formally introduced to our nabob. I'll find him!” Ellen announced, a little wildly.

It was an excuse, this run about the house and yard after Pam, to still an unaccountable beating of her heart. In her lively wake across the lawn Pam came shuffling in protest against being “led

a lamb to de slaughter o' mo' nonsense o' yöse, Miss Ellen."

"Do you observe? It's like an opera, truly," said she, pointing her finger at the Big Fellow on the steps. "Do you observe, Pam, that this is the Governor of Bar, a real, true potentate?"

"Fo' de Lawd's sake!" said Pam.

"He's going to rule the natives and the jungle, the Mohammedans and the heathen, and dress all in gorgeous costumes and sit on a gold throne chair in the midst of a gorgeous court and shout 'Off with their heads' when conversation runs low."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake!" With that Pam shuffled away out of the domain of controversy.

"I've got some striped silk. I'll make you a turban. Will you wear it, O Mogul?" Ellen asked.

"I do wish you would take things more seriously, Ellen" (from Aunt Julia).

"Oh, yes, I can be serious—very serious, Aunt Julia," Ellen answered, in a changed tone.

"Will I wear it?" cried Big, who sprang to his feet, beaming. "Yes, over the hills with you. Will you come for a walk?"

She was in a mood to which any suggestion of activity would appeal.

"Done! I want to walk, too—and fast! I hope you can keep up with me, Your Excellency, the Governor."

He was already on his feet, in ecstasy, and standing in the doorway as she took her simple

stiff-brimmed straw hat down from the rack. In masculine awe he watched her slim fingers slip the long pins home, while he was thinking that now he was going to hear all that she thought of Bar and he was to do some brave talking himself if he could only find a way to begin. But he reckoned wholly without his host. The builder of a new world to take the place of a fool's paradise set him a pace over the fields, dry for the want of rain.

Avoiding Bar entirely in a tyrannous stream of chat that gave him no opening, she told of the school and the East, in good humor, mimicking people and their traits. In butterfly mood, which may be a brittle mood, she chased butterflies. She wagered him that the Honorable Court, who might find a flaw in a law by lamplight, could not by daylight catch a gentleman in yellow and black stripes, and the Honorable Court proved himself a strategist who, after many dashes, announced his victory with a ringing shout of triumph. With the tips of the wings between his fingers, dust-sprinkled, robbing the captive of some of the tinsel powder of glory, he released the gentleman in yellow and black stripes under her chin.

“ You said I was big,” he told her, rejoicing in the spirit of play and of muscles unbound, “ but I can outrun you, and give you a good start, too.”

Anything to prove that he was not big! If mechanical science had invented a lathe which would prune a human being's size he would have been one of the first patients.

They ran fifty yards and the Honorable Court won. The fault was in a woman's skirts, she explained; and she bade him help her over a fence to another stretch of pasture land, never mentioning, in the renewed vivacity of her small-talk, his island or his journey.

How unlike her it was! How out of keeping with the bargain! What change had come over her in the last year? He counted no loss of charm. On the contrary, her charm had matured. The change was toward him!

Now he might have said: "What is it, Ellen? Don't you take any interest in Bar?" Which would have been like the real Big. What then would have been her answer? But he was not the real Big. He was a man trying to find himself in a new gallery, preoccupied, groping, conscious. Her new manner made him unnatural, distrustful of himself. With his heart full of the subject which had brought him in a glad, half-defined hope out of the house, when there did come a chance to mention it, he asked all but casually:

"What do you think of the idea of my going?"

She answered distantly, irrelevantly, as if he were speaking of things with which she was unfamiliar.

"I should think you ought to go, Big, but how am I to know?" she said.

How was she, indeed? Only last night, with the window open and watching the fireflies, she had known all about it, she thought. Then had she told herself that being a judge was a stuffy

kind of thing beside this new task whose needs she succinctly expressed as requiring a *man*—a big man.

The picturesqueness of the mission, the mystery of elements unknown, the pull of problems unsolved to one who is strong, all appealed to her as fit for him. Without Madame Mother's catechism, with Madame Mother's fine ideals no more than a quick instinct, without rehearsing any part beforehand, she was going to tell him to go! go! go!—it was a splendid thing—go! Why ask her now, when he had decided? Why, when he had his armor on, his banner raised, when she had not even fastened a buckle—why ask her what she thought of his crusade?

But she did not let the conversation flag and spanned a possible awkward pause when he was thinking what to say.

“The bronze Buddhas all have jewels of wisdom in their foreheads,” she went on. “You are to be the jewel of wisdom to these people. How strange it is! To you it must be like sealing your career in a jar and taking it far across the ocean, there to release it without knowing in what form of genii it will arise.”

“Yes. I—I—it will be a good work.”

“A good work!”

They were ascending the easy slope of a high hill, which had a local name from the single large tree that stood sentinel of a broad pasture at the crest. She paused and looked eastward in the direction of Stottstown where, on another hill,

ood a house of many gables at the end of a
aded road which ran among young trees and
st an artificial lake.

“Look, Big! You can see the Walkers’ place
om here—a thousand acres, and the Colonel
hinnying in his funny way because he hasn’t
ough, I suppose. I had a note from Ned. He’s
be back in a few days, and he’s bringing his
w machine. He takes it with him wherever he
es, as most people do a traveling bag. I think
e will have a stiff time of it with these roads.
ed’s really a very nice fellow, Big.”

“Of course, he is! At least, I’ve always liked
m,” he told her, honestly.

“So have I!” she rejoined. “He thinks his
ther has money enough, I fancy, and would
ther enjoy what they have than try to make
ore,” and she set the pace up the hill again.

What more had either to say about Bar? That
bject past rather than in anticipation, she
as silent, except for an occasional rally. His
oughts, which now separated Bar from her
ature, ventured:

“Do you find this little village restricted and
fe in the old house not what it was, youth and age
ot mating?”

Her sense of loyalty would allow no one of the
moying restraints a voice.

“I’m afraid I’m a scatterbrain,” she answered.
I’m afraid I find the joy of living too great and
ere’s the unexplained for me as there is for
verybody. I like movement. And, Big, I ought

to be doing something. I will! I will teach. I'll get over this joy of living as soon as the summer is over. Watch me suddenly turn a diligent ant one day."

He was about to protest that she was approaching a forbidden subject. But it occurred to him that this new side of her character, which he thought had been revealed to him that afternoon, made the idea that she would seek to earn a livelihood out of the question.

"This is the butterfly season," he answered, with a try at gayety.

No, she would never try to pay back that debt. Through his cloud shot the happiness of still being able to care for her while, joyously, as a girl should, she would drift on to some event that would change her life. And this set him thinking of Ned Walker and into paths he little knew.

They had not noticed the darkening sky except with a passing remark that the sun was hidden. A peal of thunder warned them of the shower from which they sought refuge under the big tree now only a few rods away. The bolts of lightning out of the purple roof, shooting in zigzag shafts of obliqueness into the blackening green of the pasture, made him say:

"It is magnificent!"

"Yes." She was looking straight away from him vacantly, a figure appreciably beautiful to any eyes in her obsession with the storm's glory.

"I don't think this is a good place for us," he was suddenly reminded. "I see that this tree

has already been struck." He took her arm to lead her away.

"Twice, if I remember," she returned, absently, without moving.

"That's the more reason. You better run the risk of getting wet. It's the only tree out here in the open. Come!"

"Oh, no! You know the saying that lightning never strikes twice in the same place," she said, with a revival of her practical side. "If it's struck twice it will surely not strike a third time."

The logic of women is sometimes hard for the judiciary to understand.

"But this is a heavy storm!" he insisted.

"Yes."

"It's what you call splintery."

"Yes, splintery—yes" (absently). "Oh" (as she came back to earth), "you mean the lightning is! Of course" (rousing herself). "It will not last long. These storms soon pass over the valley."

After the last spatter of drops, as the clouds in billowy majesty went rolling over the hills, flashing the moist green back to fresh brightness and making the windows of the houses in the village blaze, she cried:

"We must hurry. Now we'll forget the butterflies and be diligent ants."

Her lithe stride knew the slopes well. In the descent she was to show that she was as good at silence as at chatter.

"One can't talk when one is walking fast," she

half apologized. "You'll be going soon?" she asked at length, as they neared the house.

"To Washington early in the morning for instructions; then to close up all my affairs in the city; then for a real holiday at home."

To this she made no answer until he held the gate ajar for her to enter the yard.

"Stay as long as you can when you do come back," she said gently, looking directly into his eyes for the first time since they had left the tree. "Madame Mother is old and you are going on a very long journey."

XXII

COLONEL WALKER HARD PRESSED

OUT among them savages! Of all things!
Him! "

Without any variation of expression Mrs. Billings said this at breakfast; she said it as she was dusting the rooms, and probably over the dishes.

"If you think your own melancholy is any solace for mine," Uncle Theodore told her, somewhat testily, "you are mistaken."

"I'm not seeing it that way, Mister Books, considering your melancholy's your own business and mine is mine!" she snapped. "And I don't know as it will look just right in the eyes of folks for me to stay here as housekeeper after he's gone."

"Oh! He was the chaperon, was he?" Uncle Theodore laughed and got a little cheer out of this quaint notion, anyway.

"The what? I've known him a good deal longer'n I have you, and whatever scrape those savages get him into you're more to blame than anyone else. I always knew something foolish would happen to him if he had all the law nonsense he wanted. It's like letting children have all the sweets they want. I saw that back at college and warned him, too"—and to prevent any ques-

tioning of the oracle she slammed the door behind her.

This dialogue took place the morning after his patron had a wire from the Big Fellow telling of his decision.

“He is right. He is the man for the work,” said Uncle Theodore to himself. “But the thought will not make me any the less lonesome when he is gone,” he added, dismally. “Nor have I any reason,” he concluded, after a turn around the room, “for asking him to carry my burdens. Mrs. Billings is right. One’s melancholy is one’s own business. He shall have a welcome back worthy of his honors.”

Of the two, after Big’s arrival Uncle Theodore was the more cheerful. Patron had never seen disciple in such a mood before. Big was blue. He was hard hit. He was a man in love trying to find himself, after Ellen’s action had fully awakened him to the depth and distinctness of the thing in his heart. All the way on the train he had been thrashing over their talk on the walk. No word or look of hers was forgotten. He was big and old and a judge and she was young and blithe. He ought to drive out of his mind this thing which refused to be driven.

“The ’88’s and the ’48 must dine together at Jerry’s,” said Uncle Theodore, “and not a sad thought will I allow to be spoken.”

“Good! I have my friends—always my true, firm friends,” spoke that unaccountable mood of Big’s.

He telephoned at once to Willy and heard in answer, "Mr. Sweetser's busy," and found him talking to a dead wire.

But that was his own voice! I'll see about it!"

He started for *The Sentinel* office immediately. In the lobby of the editorial rooms the office boy interrupted his progress.

Your card, sir."

Why, Tommy, you know me! What does this mean?"

But the office boy was obdurate. He obeyed no orders but Willy's.

Mr. Sweetser said I wasn't to admit you without it."

You take him the name of Jim Harden and tell him if he doesn't let me in I'll break in; if I have to do that, so much the worse for me."

The boy returned to say that the Judge might be in."

Take a seat, Governor!" Willy called with a smile as he went on with his work, answering telephone rings and running through letters and copy, without further attention to his guest. Big sat a minute enjoying the situation.

Oh, yes, Governor—of course," said Willy innocently, at length. He pressed a button for a boy, whom he sent for any news from the friends. The boy returned with a piece of flimsy, which Willy glanced through.

Four white soldiers killed chasing worthless

natives in a worthless jungle. Four soldiers killed and another insurrectionist plot discovered," he remarked, casually. "The Associated Press gives it a hundred words. Four white soldiers worth a whole tropical sea peppered with islands! I suppose *The Sentinel* might allow it a stick for the soldiers' sake! It's that island of Bar, again, too—the worst of the lot. By the way, Bar is your island, isn't it, Governor? I can remember all the aldermen in town—but, of course, there is a limit to the details one can keep in mind."

In a condescending manner he passed the flimsy for Big to read.

"Anything else *The Sentinel* can do for you any time, let me know. The city editor's always glad of items," Willy added, picking up a pencil as if concluding the interview. "And if I can't see you, myself, you'll understand I'm very busy."

"Yes, there is something else!" The Big Fellow rose threateningly. "Yes, there is something, and I'm going to do it for you, personally—throw you out of the window!" he said in a big voice, and struck his fist in pantomimic display on the desk.

"Oh, indeed!" Willy poised his pencil. "Getting into the potentate habit already. Well, I've only to press the button to bring in the police. That's how we deal with potentates in these United States."

"Nonsense! You can't play this on me!" the Big Fellow protested. "Now to come down to

earth, Willy. Uncle Theodore and you and I will eat to-night at Jerry's. What do you say? We shan't have many more sessions together."

Willy fixed him with a stare of social superiority that put presumption in its place and broke into a rapid fire of talk:

"You deserter!" he cried. "Who got me into this newspaper business? *You!* Who was to stand by me and help? *You!* Do you suppose I have any time to waste on convivial habits, now? *I've* work to do and I must do it alone. You're out of the game—dismissed, disowned! Who's going to stop me from running away with the bait? Who's going to warn me when I get too red-headed? Myself, you rank backslider, just myself!

"I've got to begin my education over again. You'll see me studying law nights to make up for my folly of misplacing confidence in a quitter. I've engaged two tutors. Going to have an hour a day with each one. Getting a chauffeur, too, so I can take lessons from the tutors on the road. I'm going to build a new building twelve stories high and start an evening edition. Somebody's got to work, I tell you. That's all! I'm done with you except to be polite."

Then he called up the business office and shouted through the speaking-tube:

"Have a box of chocolate peppermints sent once a week to His Excellency, James Harden, Governor of the Island of Bar, etcetera, etcetera. Get it all in. Don't leave out the etceteras.

That's the real title—etcetera! And mind! chocolate—the Governor's favorite color."

"Oh, come, Willy! Come! come!" Big was getting flushed and embarrassed, while Willy picked up his hat from his desk, where he usually laid it when he came in full of business.

"Well, pleasant journey, Governor. You can look over the back files for any Island news, if you want. Unless an unusual number of white men that ought to be at home building up the United States are massacred, you'll find it all in the back pages, in agate. We like an interview with an alderman, but to save you postage let me say that we don't print heathen Governors' proclamations, however beautiful and legal they are. Mornin'! You'll excuse me—I've an engagement. I'm a busy man!"

With this parting shot from the doorway Willy left the Big Fellow alone, beaten and wondering.

The Sentinel's manner of announcing the Judge's resignation kept perfect faith with Willy's views. The Judge's career was narrated at length and highly praised. All that saved the account from being an obituary was the announcement, with no reference to his future work, that his address hereafter would be the island of Bar.

This was a miserable period for the Big Fellow. He laughed his way through the packing of his books, through closing up his affairs for departure, while he kept thinking that he was yet to see Ellen, yet to have days with her at home, before he started on his long journey across the Pacific.

He heard of Willy at work with his tutors, dashing about in his automobile, planning his new *Sentinel* building, buying books in quantities; then one afternoon with a message over the telephone the face of the world changed for The Hummer. For all the waters of the gossip of a city passed through Willy's sieve which caught news for *The Sentinel*. Anything political concerning any prominent men once whispered from Washington was bound to come to him.

"What!" he sang back. "What! It was on Colonel Walker's advice? To get him out of the State? Thanks! You've done me the biggest kind of a real favor!"

He sent for his car and sought Big, who was in his rooms, and to whom the news was a thunder-clap. First, he asked Willy quietly whence it came. The source seemed to satisfy him.

"I'll go to Colonel Walker at once," he said. "I'll find out about this."

So he was not fulfilling the demand of duty; so he was not answering an uninviting call to work because the highest authority in the land had thought that he was specially fitted for it. The calm, kind eyes which never laughed were frosty. He was quivering with controlled rage over having been a witless pawn in a game to defeat the ends of justice.

On their way across the city Willy simply babbled. Why should he study law now? He would discharge his tutors. A hundred plans of new conquests in as many different ways—all

Sweetserian ways—he made as they spun through the streets.

“ I’ll keep you, Big! The chocolate drops won’t get you! I’ll keep you! ”

The Big Fellow did not answer; for that matter, he did not speak once during the ride. Willy thought of him as a rumbling volcano about to erupt. Inwardly, his curiosity was high pitched. He would not have missed this meeting between the two men for ten thousand additional circulation. When they stepped out of the elevator, waiting on no formality, the Big Fellow plowed past the clerical keeper of the drawbridge in the outer room, whose “ Who do you wish to see, sir? ” was answered by a grim “ Colonel Walker, at once; ” and on he went, his coat tails brushing papers off the desk, straight into the Colonel’s private office.

The Colonel was most palpably delighted to see him.

“ Well, Judge, or Governor, I suppose I should call you now ”—and that was as far as he went with his amiable greeting, which was cut short by the aspect of that Olympian figure, devoid of either the smile or the laugh.

“ I want to know, ” demanded the Governor, his voice unusually low, “ if it was on your advice that the President sent for me. ”

If it had been John Byng in his place, as the Colonel thought afterward, Byng would have lied directly—“ jes’ as easy, jes’ as easy, ” to borrow a phrase from Pam—and said that he had never

heard a thing about this fool gossip; some newspaper yarn, probably.

“ Well, I did tell him that I couldn’t imagine a better man! ” the Colonel admitted.

“ To get me out of the State? ”

“ Well, I didn’t mention that—no, sir, Governor! ”

“ You may have me in this State a long time,” Big answered, “ and not being a judge now I’ll be busier. It all depends on what the President says.”

He took up the telephone from the Colonel’s desk and called for the White House.

“ Say that former Judge Harden asks to speak to the President at once on a matter of pressing importance.”

For the privilege of a few words in the President’s ear before the Big Fellow spoke with him, Colonel Walker would have given a large block of stock. After he had won the trench he hated the prospect of being thrown out; and for some reason that he did not explain to himself, he would rather be beaten by any man in the world than Jim Harden. But his cheerfulness masked his feelings in the interval while they waited for the answer from Washington.

“ Ne-eh! Have a chair, Governor. Have a chair, Sweetser,” for neither had yet seated himself. “ Don’t know as I remember ever seeing you here before, Governor. Some mischief up when you two come together. Expect you’ll find, Governor, that the President asked a good many

men about you. He's a great hand for looking around. Not wanting a pass, eh, Sweetser? "— and the Colonel chuckled over his joke.

"No! Issuing many to *The Courier* now?" came back the reportorial question.

Willy had about broken up the pass business in that city. His reporters paid their way and the railroad paid for its advertising.

"Ne-eh! Sweetser, I congratulate you," said the Colonel, in his most affable manner. "You deserve credit for that reform. It's just another case of business is business. I gave orders about two months ago to shut off *The Courier*. They yapped and threatened, but we ain't afraid of old Byng any more. The Gold Pig has to root a little harder, eh?" and the Colonel laughed quite heartily for him.

The bell tinkled and the Governor heard the mellow voice of the President. In a strong, unyielding tone the question went over the long distance:

"Mr. President, did you appoint me to Bar because Colonel Walker recommended me? It is vital that I should know."

"No, Governor, that is not true," came the answer. "He did call my attention to you, for what reason I do not know, nor is it to any purpose. I inquired about you from many sources. I had heard you speak and I talked with you before I made the definite offer. You were chosen because I concluded that you had the qualities which, so far as I can judge its needs, preëminently fit

you for the task. Colonel Walker is a great railroad organizer, but in the choice of a governor for an island I do not accept his opinion."

"Thank you, Mr. President. I will go. But I wouldn't if he had been responsible for my appointment."

"I know you would not, and this is one of the qualities in you to which I referred. I, myself, want you to go."

"I will, Mr. President."

Colonel Walker gave Willy one triumphant, meaning glance and begged them not to hurry away.

"Our relations revert," said Willy to Big, as they passed into the street. "You'll get your chocolate drops regularly every week, Excellency."

"Stop such nonsense! I won't have it!"

In a bearish hug, Jim Harden, the big fellow, threw his arms around Willy, the little fellow, mindless of the attention they attracted, and shook him good-naturedly.

"Willy, you're my best friend!" he said. "You really don't think I'm a quitter!"

"Yep!" Willy answered. "Squeeze me to death but you are!"

The Big Fellow released him.

"Come on, Excellency. I'm a busy man. Taking two lessons to-day. Jump in! Let me drive you back to your rooms."

"I'll walk," the Big Fellow said, disconsolately and out of temper.

“Deserter *and* quitter!” Willy called, as he speeded away. “You’re a stuffed Olympus with the sawdust running out. That’s what you are!”

Willy was an individualist and full of character, as Uncle Theodore said; and as Big was leaving the city the next day, this might be the farewell of his dearest friend.

XXIII

A BIG, SIMPLE MAN IN LOVE

WHEN a big, simple man with the boyish heart of sixteen and some of the wisdom of sixty falls in love, the abounding impulse and faith of sixteen urging him on and the wisdom of sixty bidding him pause and consider, neither "Araminta's Hope" nor the thousand books will help him. He must make a law for himself.

The Big Fellow hastened to finish his business in the city and in Washington, the sooner to begin his holiday. It pleased him not to name the day that he should reach Bolton. He would appear before the family as a surprise. The time of his going should depend on Ellen. It might be within two days or two weeks. Yes, two weeks would be time enough to make his happiness complete, he thought in a moment of wild hope.

For boyish sixteen was having its way and foolish old sixty was getting its just deserts. No graduate girl maturity should be allowed to break that bargain he had made with a two-braid girl. He would laugh her out of any such idea. She should still listen to his secrets. They would walk

together and they would sit together in the moonlight.

He would tell her of all that happened in Colonel Walker's office, which it would never do to tell Madame Mother, and of his long talk with the President, and the cold, legal, Important Member of the Cabinet; of how the President had said: "It may not seem as important to you as the bench, but it means that you may bring the light and the law to an whole people. We are sending school-teachers, but with you is the opportunity to implant a greater thing in the minds of the natives." All this he knew she would understand, not legally, not in detail, but in a sympathy which is the nerves to the muscles of a man's strength when he undertakes a task in which others have failed.

And then? No quibble could stop him. There was a good deal of Jim Harden to fall in love and it had all fallen in completely. How he should express his feelings to Ellen no longer puzzled him. The words would come, he knew. This mighty thing would flow out of his heart in a flood. There would be no stopping it.

If she would—if she would go with him to the altar of the little church in Bolton! "It's too good! It's too good! It would make me too proud! I believe it would make me great!" he said many times to himself.

"Too good!" He spoke it once aloud, breaking the silence of their rooms and making Uncle Theodore start. Uncle Theodore, expert in youth-

ful romance, student of all the signs of smitten hearts, concluded that this exclamation was caused by something in the papers which his disciple was overlooking before finally filing them away. Was any other hypothesis likely from a bachelor whose knowledge of the ways of lovers was entirely literary? Had the afflicted one written on a piece of paper "and he (the hero) sighed and in a transport," etc., Uncle Theodore would have understood the situation at once. Oh, the thousand books which he thought he knew so well!

If she would! An affirmative gave Big wing-spread possibilities in a clear sky. It made him happy to be out of the judgeship, which, with all his attachment to the bench, in some way fettered growing qualities in his mind. The prospect of having her with him on that voyage to a strange shore, where his career was to be unbottled in some new form of genii, carried him over many pleasant streams in a way that was too fast or too lingering to win the approval of a judicial temperament. And did he think she would consent? What does sixteen? It hopes. It goes with heart on sleeve, partisan and pleading.

Out of the car window on his homeward trip he saw palm trees as shadowing backgrounds for an individual. The first object to define itself pronouncedly in that Middle Western landscape was the big tree under which he and she had found shelter from the storm. Before the afternoon was over they might be sitting on one of its roots, with no splintered lightning to interrupt their colloquy.

He did a thing in suggestive contradiction to the day when he came from college a self-borne caravan, by having a boy carry his bag from the station. Then, with a new attention to such details, he looked through his pockets to see if there were any bulging contents that ought to be removed. When one is about to fly he wants no impedimenta.

His *bonhomie* had an aërial abstraction as he greeted passers-by in the main street. Always his steps were light. Although tall and sturdily built, he had little spare flesh and he carried himself in such a way that people who saw him for the first time said: "What a cheery, big fellow!" and never, "Isn't he enormous!" He walked rapidly, answering the call of sixteen to the scene of play, smiling at all the world, which could not do otherwise, if it were polite, than smile back at him. Was not he saying: "What a fine world it is!" all the way until he glanced at the church door and asked himself another question, whose answer might make it a most dour world, indeed?

No one was in sight at the house except Epaminidad, who was mowing the lawn.

"Hello, Pam! Always on the job, aren't you!" Big called. "How're the folks?"

Pam dropped the lawn-mower handle abruptly, mumbling "Fo' de Lawd's sake!" to himself. He did not make any other answer to the Big Fellow's greeting except to shake his head in a troubled way and start across the lawn.

"Surprised you, eh?"



“ Yissah, yo’ did, yissah! But dat ain’ it—no, dat ain’ it,” and his voice quavered. “ No, sah, dat ain’ it, an’ I bettah keep my mouf shut, kase it ain’ fo’ me to say.”

“ What is the matter? What makes you so glum? Anyone ill? ” Big asked, with a sudden change of manner.

Pam’s misery was interwoven with mystery.

“ No, sah. Nobody’s ill. Ev’ybody’s jes’ too lively an’ spry. Aunt Julia, she was dat mad she was a-tearin’ up an’ down de po’ch. Ise hopin’ she’s ca’med a li’l by dis time. But ’tain’ fo’ me to say, no, sah. De lawn didn’ need it nohow, but I says right away when de ructions began, I says, Ise gwine to mow it all over ’gain to-day so’s to keep my min’ kerrected.”

“ What is it? What is it? Stop talking around the bush! ”

“ ’Tain’ fo’ me to say.” He hesitated as he started to return to his work. “ I’d laugh at ’em, I would,” he whispered, confidentially. “ ’Tain’ so easy, ’tain’ so easy, dough, to laugh at dem two old ladies, when dey is ridin’ high.”

Some family difference; some minor accident; or, possibly, the servant had given notice, the Big Fellow told himself. Whatever it was he would soon make it right.

Aunt Julia must have at least partially “ ca’med,” for she was seated in the sitting-room with Madame Mother, the blinds being drawn to shut out the bright afternoon light. Both had their work-baskets, and a little psychologic per-

ception would have shown that they were in the process of "thinking" very hard. The sound of Jimmy's step prepared them for his entrance. In their distraction they greeted him simply and less effusively than usual. "Why, Jimmy!" they both exclaimed, and then they exchanged glances.

So far as they were concerned, his plan of a surprise was not a brilliant success. But that feature scarcely occurred to him. He was absorbed in the joy of his return.

"Here I am, home—home!" he told them. "Consider me an idler! I've nothing to do except to play about the old place; nothing to do but enjoy looking into your faces and drink in all that home means! Pet me, spoil me, praise me, scold me, make me stand in a corner if I steal jam, send me to bed early, make me split wood, mow the lawn, or wash dishes, and wake me early. But I'll have a sick headache—oh, awfully bad, mother, and sudden—if you ask me to go to school!"

Madame Mother joined in the spirit of the occasion with a flitting beam of happiness, as she surveyed him proudly. Aunt Julia endeavored to smile as she knit in repressed fury.

"There's a lot I can do, too," he continued. "Don't you think this wall paper is getting a little dingy? I'll tell you what! We'll hire a double-seated carriage and go to Stottstown for some new rolls and I'll hang it!"

To this he received no answer except another smile, which he accepted as an affirmative, as he looked about the room and recollections of his boy-

hood days were springing to mind from the touchstone of familiar objects. His sweeping glance was arrested by a portrait of a little girl with braids, and he rose and opened the blind and slanted the frame sideways in order that he might see it better.

“ Oh, but isn't that good of Ellen! She hasn't changed much, has she? ”

Was it something concerning her, he suddenly thought, that made Pam so miserable?

“ Where is she? Where is she? ” he asked.

Aunt Julia increased the speed of her needles. Her lips moved nervously, but not in speech.

“ She is out,” Madame Mother answered.

“ I'll find her. Oh, I'll give her a surprise. Where had I best begin to look? ”

The way in which Madame Mother glanced at Aunt Julia showed that further light must come from her sister. Aunt Julia stopped knitting with spasmodic abruptness. She spoke starkly:

“ She's out in an automobile with Ned Walker! ”

We may excuse one in an aërial frame of mind, fresh from the city, for the response of his sense of humor to the picture of the two old ladies so overwrought in their conscientious views of what seemed to him only a passing disappointment for himself—other afternoons were coming, however—and otherwise, unless to him, a negligible incident.

“ Horrors! ” he exclaimed, unthinkingly, and broke into a laugh.

“ It's not a laughing matter, Jimmy,” Madame

Mother reproved him sharply. He saw tears starting in Aunt Julia's eyes.

"That is not all," Aunt Julia resumed. "He called her Ellen when he came and it seems she's seen a lot of him. Indeed, he has been paying attention to her quite regularly while she was at school."

"Well, little aunt, what if he has? He's not a hobgoblin and she is——"

"Jimmy, did you know of this? Of their rides together on the Hudson?" It was Madame Mother's turn, in the division of authority, to ask this question.

"I do know that she is young——"

Aunt Julia shook her head in sad conviction.

"You admit it, then. You have been an accessory! And she told nothing to me—to me, the nearest person in the world to her! She deliberately deceived me!"

The Big Fellow was getting a little out of temper.

"No. We're taking it too seriously, just because his name is Walker. Why shouldn't she go riding? Why shouldn't she have friends? Why shouldn't she enjoy life?"

"Not by deception," Aunt Julia insisted. "No, not by deception."

"She couldn't deceive anyone. She is daylight!"

"And you defend her action!" This from his mother, with a gasp.

"Far be it from me to defend one who needs no

defense. Soon she will be back radiant and we'll welcome her and remember that we were young once ourselves."

How could he ever reconcile them in their little world, in which motes of pleasure might be beams of transgression, to the life of the outer world, he asked himself, after he had kissed them both on the forehead and patted Aunt Julia's hand—without receiving a word in response—and started alone over the fields which he and Ellen had tramped together a week before?

On top of the hill under the big tree he rested for a long time, watching the road toward Colonel Walker's country place. With the waves of fear, of disappointment, of inquiry that passed over him his reason permitted no cousinship. Why shouldn't she go? She did not know that he was coming home. He made sport of himself in having been the victim rather than the cause of a surprise, which served him right, perhaps. Yes, other afternoons were coming which would be his. Then he would speak. His resolution on this score was not in the slightest weakened. Nothing should prevent his telling all he felt, now.

With sunset yellowing the ribbon of dust that lay between the dark lines of the fences, over which no welcome flash of the brass of motor fittings had passed, he returned to the house to a solemn supper with one seat vacant. The two old ladies' manner and his denoting no change of view, if not the presence of Pam, would have kept them from mentioning the absent one.

After the table was cleared, Madame Mother and Aunt Julia went back to their knitting. He saw that if any talk were to break the strain of churchly monotony it must come from him. In his search for a topic to divert them he found, as one always does when he wishes to be amusing, that lively narration will not come to order. Audience and speaker had the same fault; their minds were elsewhere. Between sentences he was conscious of listening, and he knew that they were.

He talked of Theodore Dexter a while. Wasn't it odd and enjoyable this new habit of his for following young hearts in their trials? Madame Mother remarked dryly that Mr. Dexter was in his dotage, evidently; yes, very evidently. Still other tacks Big tried, for he hated to hear the ticking of the clock and the clicking of Aunt Julia's needles. At eleven Madame Mother rose and turned down the lamp wick. The act had all the significance of preparation for a siege.

"Perhaps she will stay all night at Colonel Walker's," he suggested, speaking at last of the common subject of which all three were thinking. "The automobile may have broken down. We may be sure she is safe. Why should we wait up? Why shouldn't we go to bed?"

"There's no reason why you shouldn't, Jimmy," was the only encouragement he had, and this from Madame Mother.

"Aunt Julia, I am sure you love me a little, don't you?" He took her hands, which were cold and unresponsive, in his and stopped the needles.

“Do something for your nephew! Just wait till morning and morning will make everything clear, and there will be Ellen at the breakfast table explaining and asking your pardon.”

“Do you think I would sleep?” she asked metallically, with an effort at stoical patience with his incomprehension. “Do you not know that I have been responsible for her ever since she was a baby? But, Martha, you need not stay up.”

“My place is with you,” said Madame Mother.

Here he gave up battling with windmills for want of a proper weapon and sat down at the window, listening to the old clock striking the quarters.

“Twelve!” Aunt Julia exclaimed, after the last stroke.

In a few minutes they heard the whir of the cylinders and the lights of the machine as it took the curve of the drive flashed through the window-panes, reflecting the calm, set faces of the waiting tribunal. The culprit was riding on the front seat alone with Ned.

“I’ve had a glorious time! I wonder if one ever could get tired of it!” the Big Fellow heard her say.

“I know a girl I would never tire of,” Ned answered; and the moonlight was bright enough for the Big Fellow to see Ned’s bare, bent head and his earnestness and grace of pose. He felt a shameful eavesdropper, but what he saw lasted such a short time that the instinct to withdraw was only felt before the little scene was over.

Ellen drew her hand away from Ned, laughing lightly.

“ It’s ridiculous, Ned! ” she told him. “ Why, you’re ten years older than I am! You know it’s ridiculous. If you speak of it again I’ll refuse ever to go riding with you.”

“ Ten years older! ” Big repeated, under his breath.

“ I obey for the present—till after the next ride,” Ned returned, good-naturedly. “ Now, if anyone is up, shouldn’t I apologize and explain how it was you were kept so late? ”

“ Oh, no. I can do that. Good-night! ”

The Big Fellow heard her footstep on the porch distantly in a moment when he was transfixed with his own thoughts. If Ned with his youthfulness for his years and his good looks were too old, how about himself? And what was it Willy had called him? “ A stuffed Olympus with the sawdust running out! ”

Then she was speaking to him—to him first—as she stood in the doorway, her hair and hat sparkling with dew and bringing into the room something that made the air vibrate with the joy of living; and though her hands were gloved, as she outstretched them both his went a-tingling at the touch.

“ Oh, Big! I didn’t know you were coming! You old fraud! And you waited up for me! I do need scolding! ”

With this, she turned to the others, who sat quietly looking at her.



The lights of the machine flashed through the window pane.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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“ You make me seem wicked! ” she cried to Aunt Julia. “ I didn’t expect you would wait up for me! ”

“ Did you think we would go to bed? ” asked Aunt Julia, her accent high-pitched and tremulous.

“ Why, yes, ” she answered innocently, in surprise. “ The machine got out of order and I stayed to dinner at the Walkers’ and the telephone to the village was out of order, too, so I couldn’t send word; and we came home as soon as we could. Oh, I am so sorry! ”

She took two or three quick steps in her contrition, meaning to kiss Aunt Julia and ask forgiveness, when the forbidding grimness of Aunt Julia’s face made her pause.

“ You will go to your room at once, Ellen, and wait in the morning till I come in. ”

Ellen took a step backward in quivering recoil. The Big Fellow saw her eyelashes lift in wonder and her nostrils tremble with a quick breath. Then she recovered herself and smiled.

“ Why, I was going, anyway, Aunt Julia, ” she said. “ Oh, please don’t feel so! I was very thoughtless. I should have insisted on a buggy. But I was hungry and dinner waiting, and after dinner they kept saying every few minutes that the car would soon be ready. ” She was more than contrite now; she was appealing.

“ Hours! Hours! Hours there at Colonel Walker’s, while we waited and worried here at home! I’ve given my life to your care, Ellen! ”

There were tears in Aunt Julia's voice and tears in Ellen's.

"Everything I owe to you—everything to you and Big! What was I when I came? A baby in a blanket! I do not even remember the faces of my parents."

"So you realize that, at least! You *say* you do—and so easily!" Aunt Julia was still dry-eyed; her voice was now metallic. "So easily, and you have deceived me. You have known Ned Walker for months. I, who should have been your confidante, have never been consulted."

Ellen hung her head as if confessing guilt, but when she looked up it was into Aunt Julia's eyes serenely:

"Probably there were little things I might have told you and did not," she said, "but no wrong was meant. I was conscious of none. I was happy. I may have thought that you would not understand unless you were present, and so not have written as fully as I ought. And I am thoughtless—and I do like movement, as you know, Aunt Julia."

Such admissions formed a confession without reparation to the stern old lady. They only pointed her sense of outrage.

"I taught you not to lie, and you lied!" she declared.

"No! no! Don't say that!" Ellen pleaded.

"And you've done a wanton thing to-night!"

"No! no! Oh, Aunt Julia, take that back!" Ellen begged; and she sank on her knees and took

Aunt Julia's hands in hers. "Think, Aunt Julia, think! You do owe me a little!" she said, sobbing.

Yes, Aunt Julia did owe her a little, the little being the happiness of that household. Had the Puritan guardian never thought that Ellen's proud spirit might sometimes feel the leash of her dependence? That Ellen's thoughts might sometimes dwell, kind as the household was to her, on that real father and mother whom she had never known? Gratitude and discipline mate well and quietly till the harness breaks.

"Please just say that you don't believe what you are saying—and I'll do anything, anything!" Ellen concluded.

But Aunt Julia's anger fed on anger. Stubbornness would not allow her to make a retraction, even if she thought one were due.

"I do believe," she rejoined, "that you have done what no right-thinking, respectable girl would do, and after this there is nothing I might not expect!"

Oh, that French and Irish blood! It had borne all it could. From contrition it flew into cool passion, borne on by a will as strong as Aunt Julia's. That relaxed body which had been bending for forgiveness rose in unyielding steadiness and the eyes that had been pleading with soft lights were afire.

Madame Mother, watching and listening, her manner plainly showing dissent from Aunt Julia's action, though Ellen was her sister's special care,

leaned forward and opened her lips as if she would speak; but Big was ahead of her.

“It’s shameful! You are entirely wrong, Aunt Julia!” he said.

Then on Madame Mother’s face—as she looked toward her son who was regarding Ellen in pity, in sympathy, in worship which he was unable to repress—appeared the light of a new understanding, and she was silent.

“Good-night, Aunt Martha. Good-night, Aunt Julia. I’ll not be in my room in the morning, Aunt Julia,” Ellen said, and went up the stairs.

The Big Fellow had no thought of his words, which now came quickly. He spoke out of his raging heart:

“You ought to ask her forgiveness after that! You have done her a cruel wrong, Aunt Julia! You will be sorry for it in the morning. This minute we ought all to go on our knees to her! The worst of her is better than all our virtues together!”

Madame Mother was only firm, properly firm, in keeping with her view of the situation, as she said:

“Jimmy, I am sorry to see that you are not yet entirely cured of your temper. This is clearly a case for Julia’s authority, with which you and I have nothing to do.”

“I have everything!” he answered.

Madame Mother shook her head at him, comprehendingly; and the pleader, put out of court, ran upstairs, calling to Ellen:

“ She doesn’t really mean it! She loves you, as we all do! I promise you she doesn’t realize what she was saying and she will ask you to forgive her the instant that she does ”—as he was sure that she would.

Ellen had already closed her door. He knocked. Waiting outside for her to respond, he saw that Ned Walker’s automobile had been stopped in the road, evidently by a tire puncture, for he was working over the rear wheel by the light of a lantern.

“ Do let me speak a word! ” he persisted. “ Consider how Aunt Julia was worried—what a martyr to her sense of duty she is and how overwrought! ”

Now she did answer, quietly from within:

“ Thank you, Big. I understand. And, Big, I see Ned’s machine is broken down out by the gate. He will gladly come for me in the morning and take me to Stottstown. Will you send Pam to say that I ask him to come over at seven? ”

“ Oh, no, Ellen! Please wait a little. I ask you to—old Big asks you! ”

She seemed not to hear him; or, if she heard, not to consider what he said.

“ Never mind. I can do it myself. That’s better, anyway. ”

She opened the door to come out just as Madame Mother and Aunt Julia were at the head of the stairs. There in the hall they paused and she paused for a brittle second, their faces white in the flicker of the candlelight.

“ Now, Aunt Julia,” he begged, “ you see the result. She’s going away! You’re driving her out! You’re breaking my heart! ”

“ If she chooses to run away from me—after all I have done——” Aunt Julia began.

“ No! Not that! That is not fair! ” he insisted.

Perhaps Aunt Julia, who had done all out of love, agreed with him in her heart. She did not finish the utterance of that reproach.

“ I cannot stop her. She is of age! ” And with her leading, she and Madame Mother passed on to Madame Mother’s room.

Ellen, still, cold, her expression masklike, waited on the end of the interview as a release from the futile and unbearable and hastened, without having spoken, down the stairs. What a message her action had for the Big Fellow! In her hour of need she passed him by to go to Ned Walker!

There was no other sound except her footsteps. His thoughts threshing, he heard her unbolt the door. Through the hall window he saw a slim figure, intent purpose in its aspect, flit across the lawn to Ned Walker. Their faces he could not see or guess their words. All this was wrapped in the mystery of the night and the moonlight. She spoke to Ned for a moment and then came running back. Big heard her bolt the door, and when she returned he was standing exactly where she had left him.

“ Ellen! ” He was going to speak all he had in his heart.

She stopped him by the very quickness of her manner if not of her words, which bore at their outset the finality of a parting message.

“Ned will come,” she said. “And now, Big, don’t! Don’t hurt me by saying anything more. It will always be the same between you and me——” her voice caught and she paused, only to proceed passionately—“and I’ll write to the potentate, if I may.”

Then that winning impulse of his in great crises, as concentrated as a rifle’s course to its target, sent his blood whipping in his veins. He wanted to take her in his arms, to say that she should not go without him, for he loved her. But will held impulse in control. What right had he, the big one, the Judge, the Governor, the man on the threshold of middle age, to presume on his position as her guardian and benefactor, which he knew that he was in her eyes? He could see that she was smiling and the thought that she could smile smote him—an ill student of a woman’s smile.

“Will you tell Pam to help me with my trunk at seven?” she asked. “And you would not like to be pled with if you were in my place, would you, Big? I can’t help what I am doing. Things are too splintery. A few hours will not change my view. It’s just I—what is in me—stubbornness—anything! I could not sit down to breakfast in this house in the morning—I should choke! I can’t do anything but go. And you try to dissuade me—you—when the whole thing is hard enough

with—without that! Good-night, Big. Good-night, Governor of the tropic island! ”

She dwelt on the word “ Governor ” as she held out her hand frankly. He took it, but in the barest interval it was withdrawn and she was back in her room, while he stood, a forlorn statue in the dim light, that scene by the automobile reproducing itself to his mind as one in which her blitheness seemed truly at home. She had spoken to Ned with an unmistakable fondness. Her censure of Ned’s persistence had had the playfulness of one little offended. The Big Fellow thought now that he understood everything. Yet, one more effort would he make for her sake.

“ Madame Mother! Aunt Julia! ” he called, as he rapped on his mother’s door.

No answer came.

“ Madame Mother! Aunt Julia! She’s going! Won’t you let me say one word for you to her? ”

“ We are praying, Jimmy,” Madame Mother responded.

“ We shall not change,” said Aunt Julia. “ It is her place to speak first.”

Too much respect he had for Ellen’s position, too much respect for his own, now, to be present at her departure. With dew-soaked boots he marched and countermarched over the fields, making a new bargain with life; and from the hill he saw the machine speeding along the road toward Stottstown shortly after seven. When he returned he went to his room and began to pack.

“ I am sorry, but I can’t stay after she has

gone," he told his mother, gently. "I want to be at my work. I will start at once."

By leaving that afternoon he could catch an earlier steamer than he had planned. Madame Mother and Aunt Julia, pale and haggard, but uplifted by that Puritan conviction, which is its own solace, of duty done, understood how little holiday, after what had happened, there would be in that house in the week to come. Though suffering keenly in their hearts, they conspired that his parting should not be gloomy. For this was a matter having nothing to do with his opinions or theirs. What were a few days to Madame Mother with the span of sixty years behind her, when she lived in another's progress rather than his presence? In time he would return from his island, his great work done, and all would be well. She was hopeful. She gave him a little advice. Moist-eyed, yet speaking cheerfully—far more cheerfully than he—in her pride of him, she bade him Godspeed on his mission.

As Epaminanidad, the true philosopher of the household, had said, you couldn't take a step in the dark in that family without bumping into "some *karakter* furnichur."

XXIV

DOUBLE PAY FOR ABC'S

I DUNNO why yose gwine an' I dunno wheah yose gwine," Pam said, as he and Ned Walker lifted the trunk into the tonneau; "but dey's one t'ing I do know, jes' as kerrect an' easy. I knows mah heart's with yo' an' yose right. An', Miss Ellen"—a lean and stooped old figure, with grizzly, kinky hair and dusky, wrinkled skin bluish in the early light, he looked into her eyes, appealingly—"Miss Ellen, sometimes a pusson has a kind o' deep feelin' he cain't 'spress in any other way—an', Miss Ellen, I'd like to kiss yo' hand."

"You old silly!" she said. "You old dear!" she added, her voice catching, and she held out her slim, beautiful hand while he made a ceremonial of touching his lips to the fingers.

"Miss Ellen, keep cheerful. All de clouds roll by jes' as easy, jes' as easy, when yo' keeps cheerful. Good-by!"

Ned threw in the gear, and Pam stepped back from the machine with tears glistening on his cheeks.

"There is someone else who kisses your hand," Ned suggested.

"Not in that house, I fear," she said, absently.

"Well, speaking for myself, I've been more ambitious," he returned.

"And not very successful."

"Wholly unsuccessful. Which way?" he asked. "To Stottstown, I suppose."

"Yes, of course, and—then I'll direct you," she answered.

Why had she not mentioned that she wished to go to Stottstown before she went into the house last evening? Why had she sent for him so suddenly? It was not for him to conjecture about private matters. But they did concern him if he had been a cause. So he put a question:

"It was all right? They understood why you were so late?"

"I don't know just how much they understood. There was a little quarrel. I'm going away."

He would explain, he began earnestly; he would write a note; he would—but she stopped him.

"That is all over. It's very good of you to take me, Ned," she said, definitely, looking directly at him for the first time since she had come down the steps and then almost immediately back to the road, which was flowing no faster than her thoughts.

He could not keep away from the topic which she had forbidden.

"Come to our house to stay!" he begged. "Oh, I wish you would stay forever! My mother, I know, would like to have you, and father is fond of you, and—yes, he'd like to have you."

“ Do you think the Colonel really would? ” she asked.

“ I know he would! You—you mustn’t think family rows have any influence with him on this score.”

Ned stole such glances at her face as his attention to the machine would permit. Her pallor was passing with the rush of the air. Her absorption in her troubles, the traces of pain in the lines of the mouth, made sympathy urge on his suit.

“ No, no! He doesn’t care, either, whether you have money—if that makes you hesitate. No, he’s not selfish that way. He is selfish only in that he loves the game of making money and beating his enemies. He loves it as an opium fiend loves opium. Yes, that part would be all right. What does it matter if it isn’t? He could go to the devil if you would only say——”

By this time his earnestness had so far invaded her preoccupation that she was hearing him quite distinctly. This outburst, she suddenly realized, must be the result of some question, indistinct in her memory, which she had asked him about the Colonel just to make conversation.

“ Ned, you agreed—and, Ned, now, of all times! ” she pleaded, with a little cry, which made him ashamed and confused.

“ Oh, I’m a brute! ” he exclaimed. “ But I couldn’t help it, and if—if ” (with conviction) “ if I couldn’t help it, doesn’t that show how deeply I feel? Doesn’t it? ”

“ Yes; ” and she had to smile at his ingenu-

ousness, which, in a handsome man, has its attraction.

They were nearing the private road which led to the Walkers' country place.

"You'll come up for breakfast, won't you?" he asked.

She started at the suggestion.

"No, no!" She spoke with a touch of impatience which a second thought told her was inconsiderate. "No, Ned," she said, more gently; and he had another glimpse of her eyes begging for comprehension from under the curtains of the wonderful lashes. "I'm not hungry—and unless you are, I'd really like to keep right on to Stottstown. Is that too far? It is so good of you to bring me."

"I could take you clear to New York without getting hungry, myself," he said.

She had to smile at him for this. It was a pleasant compliment after one has been called wanton.

"You're going beyond Stottstown, aren't you?" he asked, greedily, over the prospect that rose before him.

"Yes."

"Then we'll have breakfast there at the hotel. Shall we? May I?"

"Yes, of course you may," she answered.

"Splendid! Splendid! Oh, but I'll enjoy it!" Ned cried.

His thoughts were all of the breakfast as they sped along, while she was trying to think, think,

think how she could earn money, just as Big, she reminded herself, had had to think ten years before when he set out for the city.

Ned picked flowers from the hotel-keeper's garden and, lacking a vase, put them in a pitcher for the table, and he made believe there was never such another meal in the world as this in the cool of a summer morning. He was quite in a mood to have it last all through the forenoon; only she insisted that they proceed to the home of a school-girl comrade some ten miles beyond Stottstown. There he carried the trunk onto the porch in the best porter's style, and doffing his cap suggested that it was "a hot day, Miss," as if a tip would relieve the temperature considerably. She gave him a five-cent piece, which he reverently put in his pocket.

"You have been good about this, Ned," she told him. "You've made it easier by being so light-hearted."

He knew something that would make him really light-hearted, but he could not say that in the presence of Miss Tyson, the girl friend.

"I'm coming to take you both out for a spin, if I may," he said; "and is there anything else I can do for you?"

"Yes, Ned," she answered, "if you would send word to the post-office at Bolton to forward any letters—or, no, I can write as well."

"No, you can't—not nearly. I'll go right over before I return." Then he called from the machine before departing, in triumph: "I've got a

better way. I'll bring your mail every day;" and before he could be answered, this young-old millionaire's son, who was a puzzle to his father, was out of hearing.

Ned kept to his schedule with faithful regularity. When there was nothing for her at the Bolton post-office, he thought it was his duty to go and tell her so. One morning he brought her a letter with the address in a firm, copperplate hand. She did not read it at the time. Even when she went to her room she laid it on the bureau until after luncheon. When, finally, she tore open the envelope and breathlessly caught its sense, she told herself that everything was as she wished. All the nonsense was out of her head, and happily he had never had any in his, she thought. She laughed at herself—a "professionally cheerful" laugh. The Big Fellow had written from the train, and he had not mentioned that he had left home on her account before his holiday was over. A part may be quoted:

"Here I am speeding at forty miles an hour on my ten-thousand-mile journey, with all the marvels to unfold at the end. Am I to be the jewel of wisdom in the forehead of a people, as you say? It's a beautiful idea and romantic, but, between you and me, I seem to be one of the bearers of the little red schoolhouse and the town meeting; one of the instruments to show the Tongals how to be wise for themselves, without depending on anyone's else wisdom, which is the true American

way. Flattery though it is, I'm extremely pleased to be called a jewel of wisdom by a competent authority such as yourself.

"All of Lincoln's speeches are in my trunk. Could I make this people understand him, it seems as if my mission were all accomplished and my mind perfectly corrected, as Pam says.

"I have also a score of books about the Eastern peoples—Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Indians, and all the rest. You can picture me poring over them on the voyage, somewhat ticklish about accepting made-to-order opinions, for no other country's experience will fit the situation when you are taking the little red schoolhouse to such a destination.

"Imagine me forgetting everything else in my work" (untruth No. 1, from a Governor who ought to tell the truth), "striving for patience and really to be that jewel of wisdom, with many a big brother's" (untruth No. 2) "thoughts for your happiness and welfare, believing in your own rare jewel of brightness, goodness, and wisdom. I put wisdom last, you see, and put brightness first. Will you not write to me? Tell me all you are doing. Every detail will interest me when I am so far from home.

"Big."

They were to be good friends and correspond, like comrade brother and sister, two-braid bargains forgotten in their maturity. She wrote to him at once, saying what a splendid thing it was

that he could bend his whole mind to a task that would be disagreeable to most men and telling him what a good time she was having.

But he would not—this thought occurred to her afterward—no, of course he would not think that what she was about to do was because of any—of any—— Of course not. Why should he? Had she ever given him any reason to suppose such a thing? Wasn't she going on her own responsibility, not even mentioning to the authorities that she knew him?

“It's abc's to little brown children and no 'math,' ” as she told Miss Tyson, confessing her secret, “and I do know my abc's, and it's double any pay I could get at home ”—and she would like to travel and that was all there was to it.

For recommendations she required only that of the famous school on the Hudson River, whose principal wrote that “you are foolish, I think, as a good many who are going I am afraid are not very nice ”—“nice ” being a favorite word of the writer—which made one Miss Destiny, of Plymouth Rock and Virginia, who had never been so hard pressed for help of the right kind in any crisis, most grateful to enlist Miss Ellen Moore.

She was going away without another glimpse of the old house or of Aunt Julia and Madame Mother, to whom she had sent her address when she first arrived at Miss Tyson's. “You are welcome here always when you show some appreciation of your offense and some contrition,” Aunt Julia, suffering, had written stiffly in an-

swer. Ellen wrote again the night before her departure was arranged, saying she was well and had found a position as a teacher. That letter cost her many tears, because she could not speak either of the love or the pain in her heart without, it seemed to her, asking forgiveness for having been wanton. That she would never do.

Of her destination she had said nothing whatever to Ned, who took her to the station in his car. Miss Tyson was along, of course; but he did manage to be alone with Ellen for a moment.

"I haven't your address yet," he said, planning to follow in the automobile, if he could; if not, in a Pullman.

"The island of Bar," she answered.

Ned dropped her trunk check in his surprise. Nonplused, speechless, he bent to pick it up, dropping for it on the flagging in broad daylight.

"This isn't fair!" he declared, in sober reproach.

"Why, yes, Ned, it is and quite necessary—when you don't know 'math' and you get double pay for teaching brown children their abc's," she answered. "Besides, I forbade one topic from the first. And, Ned—now don't look as if I were so cruel—I'm not the first one. You've so many interests that you'll soon forget. Think if I had accepted you at first what a position you would be in!"

"Oh, I know," he stammered, a culprit convicted, "I know all about what can be said on that score. I——" Miss Tyson here rejoined them and

the block signal tinkled out the train's approach. "But this, I thought," he concluded, with a brave effort, "was to be rather permanent."

Looking out of the car window she waved her hand to him as he stood on the station platform beside Miss Tyson. He brightened, and, without regard to appearances, from the tips of his fingers, handsomely, he blew her a kiss, which was as near as he had ever come to the real article.

MISS DESTINY MARCHES

THERE is a young woman called Miss Destiny, who is the guiding spirit of the nation. She is a great care to the folks out Plymouth Rock way, and if you will look at her career in one spirit it is only natural that she should be. Isn't she theirs? Didn't they nurse her in infancy and in short dresses, with the future uncertain?

In fond parental disapproval they have resented, in turn, all the steps she has taken away from home, although on the Fourth of July, when the steps are recognized as the path of history, they may say, "Look at our noble daughter—*our* daughter!" only to go on worrying and criticising as soon as the bunting is down and the litter of exploded firecracker wrappers swept up.

Yes, oh, yes! you may be succeeding very well, my dear, but do not forget your mother's principles and beware of the salaaming faithful who believe that whatever the mistress of their adoration does must be right because she does it. Miss Destiny rarely talks back, possibly be-

ing too busy, when she might to some controversial purpose, with allusions to King Philip's wars and a later generation's irresponsibility for the things that blood will tell. In the fashion of Mrs. Harden, the greater grows the child, the more particular is the parental inclination to keep the child in hand.

"This is too much!" said the folks out Plymouth Rock way, after that long leap across the Pacific. "You shake the tropical dust off your skirts at once, young lady, and return by the first steamer to Boston, and don't forget to ask for prayers"—prayers of foreign colonial secretaries, perhaps.

Was she unfilial to disobey? No doubt; yet so long had they seen only her receding back that they would scarcely recognize the face of their own offspring if they met her in Back Bay.

"Don't you know it's sinful and against the Constitution to colonize?" they gasped. "At least, do say you are only visiting! You aren't really laying out quarter sections and getting property rights when sugar is a glut in the market, we grow our own tobacco, and the banana trade is overdone already?"

"I'm not colonizing. I'm doing this thing in my own way," she answered, glancing over her shoulder with an enigmatic smile.

She is young. She never knows just what she may or may not do. This new departure had been easy, not to say delightful, because she went as the guiding spirit of a victorious squadron, which

was faster, not to say more sanitary, than the *Mayflower*. Having concluded to remain temporarily, she now found that the prospect did not altogether please. Her Emersonian brow was wrinkled by the riddles of a new problem.

“Come back! Come back, anyway! It’s not too late!” insisted the Plymouth Rock folks, redoubling their cries at this stage.

To yield was to forfeit the very thing which the Plymouth Rock folks thought that she had forfeited by remaining. She would have no right to look the morning sun in the face.

It was not the first time she had been in trouble. A light-hearted traveler who may trip to the sound of music and compliments, this guiding spirit of the nation is a hard mistress when the band has gone home, the flatterer’s words are forgotten, and labor begins. Then she sends gold lace to the rear and calls for men in working clothes. She appeals to a Madame Mother for her son. She casts the silver net of her wiles over such girls as Miss Ellen Moore.

Kiddy Witherbee was put on her list at the same time as big Jim Harden. All he asked in the world of Miss Destiny was this honor of sitting beside the Big Fellow on the train, taking notes of letters to be written. A disciple of the disciple was he; and through the windows of his eyeglasses he observed more than most people guessed.

Pete Maloney’s permanency in the courthouse did not mean that the other half of the Big Fel-

low's personal political machine was unrepresented. Was not young Tim, with a touch of his father's brogue, the chaplain of a regiment in that very island of Bar, from which he sent home accounts which Mrs. Maloney was always quoting.

"It's a good praste he is. Didn't I have it from the Bishop himsilf that he was?" said she. "An' that naden't interfere with his havin' a sinse of humor, as the Bishop himsilf says, too. Shure, what he tells about thim haythin makes me cry mesilf asleep a-laughin' whin I'm wide awake with me pride of him."

"I'll bet the haythin aren't funny, at all, at all. It's the way he tells it intirely," Pete insisted. "He's the droll one. Shure, but I'd like to seen him in th' fight, 'longside the sojers, him a-forgittin' himsilf an' th' ould blood a-risin' up an', in want of a rifle, him a-usin' a club!"

"Shure, he prayed for the shame of it," returned Mrs. Maloney. "An' I tould the Bishop that, an' what d'ye think he said? 'Mrs. Maloney,' says he, 'I wouldn't worry. Maybe he wasn't near enough to use his fists. It's a strange counthry an' customs are diff'rent.'"

But Mrs. Maloney would talk right on through the whole book if permission were given, and with anything Miss Destiny did when Tim was along you may be sure that she would have no quarrel.

"I will look after the young hearts if you attend to the great lady," Theodore Dexter had said to the Big Fellow, endeavoring to be cheerful at the railroad station.

Willy Sweetser was not present. In a telegram received on the train, "Have a look at the great country you are passing through and be penitent," his farewell thoughts were spoken.

By the route which the pioneers answering Miss Destiny's call had taken in their westward marching, the Big Fellow was traveling across the Mississippi and the farms of the plains to the higher levels of the ranges, over the Rockies to the garden spot on the other side, which looks across the world's broadest waters. A few of his many friends scattered through the country, friends made, some of them, in a single meeting, who greeted him at stopping-places, brought him near in feeling to the common quality of all the people of his own land whose ambassador he was to be.

"We're carrying a message for all our fellow Americans, Kiddy, you and I," he told his secretary.

"And you're just the one to carry it, Boss, too," said Kiddy. "You're just like America."

With all local associations in the perspective now, the sweeping panorama of States out of the car window brought Big what he thought was a clearer vision of another affair. He had not received Ellen's letter. All he knew was that she had gone away in Ned Walker's car. Of her sense and taste, his judgment was too sure to allow him any worry on that score. In his heart was a sore and vacant place which he must fill with work, while he had the armor of his laugh and his smile to hide his feelings from the world.

Hard plowing on a straight line for him, and the harder the better!

Could he believe that Ellen had failed to see the truth behind the actions of an old fellow like himself who had been so thoroughly in earnest? Did not this explain her conduct? Her lack of interest in his journey? Her insistent chatter that afternoon when they ascended Big Tree Hill together? Now he understood that she had not wanted to appear ungrateful to her benefactor. She had aimed to avoid a situation where she would have to say anything to hurt old Big. In the hope of relieving her of any fears, he had written to her in the spirit of comradeship.

If the knowledge of one human being, which he showed in this letter, was an example of his knowledge of human nature in general, then the judgment of the treaty ports of China might be well grounded. Wherever white men gathered, in some corner of the doorstep of a trade route to the yellow and brown millions, ran the titter of amusement over the little red schoolhouse. Plymouth Rock and the New England town meetings were coming to the East! How American! How vastly amusing! Had not the British been learning the game in India for three hundred years? Did New England schoolma'ams know more than British civil servants?

For this was the view held by the white men in the regions to which he was bound. His route of travel was the usual one. The East he first saw while his steamer stopped in Japan, where

an ancient civilization, broken out of feudalism by the touchstone of foreign relations, had made a great State. The East he next saw in treaty-port glimpses of the coastal edge of China, with its still older civilization. But from China to the Mediterranean no government has ever been known except that of the autocrat by birth, by conquest, or by appointment from some throne. And that is the great truth of the East, so old, so very old and set in its thought, which sits on ancestral tombs waiting for life to pass; in which through generations has never arisen the idea that children could know more or do differently than their revered grandsires.

Between Hong Kong and the Red Sea, if we may speak of half the world in a few words, lay India and all the regions where the British rule honestly and build roads and bridges in the opportunism of year-to-year control, but have left no impress on the native mind. To the South lay the islands of a people who were nomadic bands when Spain came, long used to Spanish profit-taking Governors whose hand was hard—and this was the Big Fellow's destination. In an insular outpost of that old, old East he was to try to establish a thing new in half the world, and the thing which was so good to us that the folks out Plymouth Rock way said that either we ought to carry it with the flag or haul the flag down.

Was the appointed man of Miss Destiny, in whose blood ran the Constitution, tilting against

windmills? His career and the success of an idea lay with his patience, his skill, and his humanity. The representatives of the great white races who live in the East, absorb the Oriental faults of the masses among whom they dwell. Our clerk from Hamburg or Tooting, who has four or five Chinese servants and owns a race pony, is a great authority. How could the wisdom of Uncle Theodore's thousand books, from Palestine to the present, take the place of three or four trips out and back on a P. and O. or a German liner!

Into these communities of the treaty ports came the big young Governor, with his happy "I am glad to meet you's," asking questions of everybody he met in his friendly way, as if he had known them a long time. He was like some genial American justice of the peace, they said, with none of the hauteur and the side which you must have—oh, positively must!—to rule these Eastern peoples. Out of their great experience they warned him of his folly. Fancy the Islanders learning the use of the ballot! Why, they would accept kindness as a weakness. They understood nothing but the strong hand. A governor who was not master would not be a governor to them, any more than a soldier with a cornstalk for a rifle would be a soldier. Did he think that the Tongals of Bar were farmers of the Middle West? (No, he did not, by a long way, we will say for him.) But the philosophical said that he would learn with time, as everybody in the East had, the impracticability of his programme.

“ You will see, Governor,” he was told, “ that you will have to fall back on the old methods.”

“ No! ” he answered. “ I was sent to carry out a different idea or I would not have come. It is not so many centuries since we ourselves thought that we got our food and air by the grace of a lord of the manor, who, naturally, tried to keep us in the illusion by a commanding manner. Gradually our vision has widened and our capacity grown. A little of what we have we would transplant. We will give the Tongals schools; we will let them elect their own head men and mayors; we will teach them to creep first, in the hope that they will learn to walk. It may be a long time before they can take their own course without our direction, but that is for time to tell.

“ You say we will only sow the seed of rebellion? I can't believe that will prove true in the end. The pupil will not always misunderstand a patient and honest teacher. I don't think human nature can be so different in Bar but it will respond in self-interest to benefits bestowed.”

Yes, he was a most provoking optimist, this son whom Madame Mother had sent out to look after the foundling, and smiling, even laughing, as he rushed into the arms of the gods who would destroy him. Our clerk from Tooting would like to see him and his little red schoolhouse after he had been on the job for two years. The big American would be lucky if he escaped assassination.

But some far-seeing merchants and students and governors were less inclined to sneer. They were only scrutinizing and skeptical and too conscious of the slightness of opportunism's control of the mighty powers that the countless millions might unloose to be cocksure of anything. And was that knight who tilted against the windmills altogether ignoble? Didn't you like him? The treaty ports, whose opinion was worth while, had to like the Big Fellow.

Miss Destiny trying out an unselfish ideal—to salve her conscience for too hasty a leap, if you will—with her face set, is little minded to look up the gossips or the old herb doctors for advice. The Big Fellow was as unconscious of the chatter about his inexperience and naïve inadequacy as a battleship of foam bubbles spinning out from its screw. If all the talk of the China coast had been in his praise, it would not have been worth as much to him as the cablegram he received on the eve of the last stage of his journey.

Willy Sweetser, you must know, had had a change of heart, such a change as such a heart as Willy's was bound to have. With money in the cashier's drawer of *The Sentinel* to pay for the shot, he did not allow a rate of one dollar and seventy-five cents a word to blue-pencil his feelings:

“Did my best to keep you from going. You went. Duty done. I failed. Have been thinking. Light breaks. Apologies, salaams. Governors, islands, judges, brownies, tropical gold bricks not

interfere with true friendship. Editorial to-day Jim Harden will fix that island business. Trust him. All needed was right man. Circulation booming. Studying law hard. Three tutors. Trying to be wise, but prefer you on tap. Hurry up, Big, and finish job. Make you Governor real State. Two years limit allow you stay. Planning visit you. Theodore, Mrs. Billings well. Love. Willy."

We have the word of Kiddy Witherbee, who keeps the record, that the Governor of Bar danced around and around the table, shouting in abandoned, rollicking glee. His friend, his best friend, was won back.

"More power to you. Welcome to the bar. You can't visit me too soon. You're stuffing your old Olympus with muscle for fray," he cabled in answer. "You and Theodore eat Jerry's to-night and think of me"—as they did, ten thousand miles away.

XXVI

HIS WELCOME TO BAR

NOW, with their temperate zone chrysalis of wool packed in their trunks, the Big Fellow and Kiddy, clad in their tropical cottons bought at a treaty port, were carried southward by a cruiser of the white navy to seas and a sky that became a lighter blue as the sun grew warmer. On the shores of the islands among which they passed, they saw a darker and richer nature than they had known before and rows of coconut palms where the pearly foam of the surf lapped the sandy beaches; and on the fourth morning the mountains of Bar appeared out of the

The seamen began to prepare one of the steam launches to disembark the passengers; but this was unnecessary. That speck alone on the waters approaching proved to be a small gunboat of a hundred tons' burden, with two Colt's rapid-fire guns forward and two three-pounders aft. Rolling to meet the long, low swell the U. S. S. *Paktowan*, Ensign Clancy commanding, came smartly along and received the new Governor and his secretary aboard. A dapper, boyish, round-faced youngster was Clancy, who supplied his guests

with the only two chairs on his diminutive quarter-deck.

“ You’ll have to move about with the sun and sit close to each other,” said he, “ or you’ll get out of the shade of that postage stamp of an awning.”

“ In case your engines break down, I should think you might use a napkin for a sail,” said the Governor, cheerily.

“ Yes, if it was reefed she could carry it,” Clancy answered. “ But she’s the navy of Bar, sir, at your service, and I’m her admiral, who’ll hear nothing against her.”

The Governor thought that he and Clancy would get on first rate together.

“ How are things on the island? ” he asked.

“ They’re pretty bad. Old General ‘ Prairie Fire’s ’ still swearing——” and then Clancy stopped, impulsively.

“ General who? ” pursued the Big Fellow.

“ General Strong, sir.”

Clancy would not be drawn any further.

“ Just forget I said that, sir. My business is not to call names, but to patrol the rivers and the coast, with an eye to filibusters, and to be ready to fight any time I’m wanted. That’s all, sir. And after you have looked around I’ll be glad to answer any and all questions as intelligently as I can. And your navy is in a most efficient state, Governor,” said the Lord High Admiral of the five bays of Bar, not to mention the many streams.

When the Americans occupied the island they

and found the *Paktowan*, a rusty piece of junk, stalled in the mud. Clancy asked the Admiral if he might have her provided he could make her run, and the Admiral gave his consent. So the mission had patched and doctored her till she was a great command, to his mind's eye.

It was an incident in her varied career, and Clancy enjoyed all incidents, to introduce the new Governor to his island. As they steamed toward the harbor, out of its massy green shores developed the roofs and the white house-sides and the cathedral tower of Takar. From what he had heard and what Clancy had said, the Big Fellow had not expected a hearty welcome, but he had only half guessed how cold an official reception can be.

The *Paktowan* proceeded up the turbid Takar river, from which the capital took its name, to the landing-place, which was only a few steps from the plaza. Here the General commanding and his staff and the officers of the garrison were waiting with two companies of the Sixty-fifth, a rigid line of white faces and khaki on the back-ground of white clothes dotted by a hundred or more brown faces.

One of the natives, a boy of sixteen or seventeen, had edged ahead of the others, his moon face and soft black eyes full of up-gazing wonder at this fair-haired giant. Big, not yet weaned from the habits of home, where man-service is dear, by the habits of the East, where man-service is cheap, he came ashore carrying his suit-case. Benito may

have been drawn on by the Governor's stature or by his smile; at any rate, the Governor, as he spoke to the General, felt a hand next to his on the handle and heard a shrill voice say, "I carry him," and the case was out of his grasp.

"Here, you—imp, get out of that!" said the General, reaching for Benito, who adroitly dodged.

"I carry him, Great Bigness. No want pay!" Benito appealed to the big smile above his head.

"All right! Go ahead! You carry him, my boy," said the Governor, who was being introduced to the officers.

Father Tim Maloney, in khaki, with a cross on his shoulders, had meant to wait his turn; but the Big Fellow spied him with a hearty, "Well, how are you, Tim? Are you tongue-tied?" Tim was well, blue eyes dancing with humor.

Two rattle-trap carriages had been provided, and, with the troops as escort, the Governor and the General and his staff drove into the oblong plaza, with its double rows of palms in the center, the cathedral at one end, the Government Palace at the other, and the barracks and shops and residences of the well-to-do along its long sides. The people, most of them in native attire, their shirts hanging outside their trousers, and some of a lighter complexion, telltale of Spanish blood, in European cut of duck, looked on disinterestedly or loweringly.

There was little curiosity, except when they remarked the size of the newcomer and compared

him to the giant soldier of the General's staff, Major Staton. No shout of welcome came from their lips; no sign of welcome was in their faces. The Governor felt that but for the row of bayonets he might be put aboard the first steamer, if the charitable had their way, or, more likely, shot on the spot by will of the majority.

The troops came to rest at the foot of the steps of the big building from which the island had been ruled by Spain, and within the Bishop of the diocese and some local officials received the Governor with Spanish politeness, while he was thinking how he would ever reach the hearts and minds concealed by those expressionless Oriental faces. This roomy, unhomelike Palace, with hardwood floors and bare walls, he was to occupy alone. If Ellen had only come with him! But why should she? He always became argumentative when these unbidden thoughts which would not down appeared. Why should he have brought her to this isolated island, with no outlook and no diversion, except a problem which most of the world thought unworth solving?

Instead of playing the sorrowful knight, he had better be getting acquainted with the men of the island who were friendly or, at least, had come to pay their respects. If the General failed to introduce him to any of the officials and leading citizens, Father Tim, ubiquitous, talkative, the life of the party, made good the neglect. Thus we come to a group of new characters, each of which is to play a part in the Big Fellow's career

and Ellen's, while the old characters in the homeland may not be forgotten. He catalogued them at once as a cabinet of first influences.

No. 1. General "Prairie Fire" Strong, who received his sobriquet from the Indians in his younger days in the Sioux campaign. He was fat, bald, red-faced, with a bristling moustache, and suffered much from the heat. His position as a military autocrat was endangered by the arrival of a civil governor who was to coöperate with him. Against this outrage he had been talking ever since he heard the news. His whole idea of a campaign was Indian tactics. It is said that Mrs. Staton, wife of the Major, who formally denied the allegation, once remarked that the prairie fire found the jungle too moist and green to burn. A brave man gone to seed, the General was now complaining and garrulous. He drank heavily, but not more heavily than he swore. His profanity the wits of the garrison had classified in five strings. He fired No. 1 string, and sometimes No. 2 string in intervals between the blasts of No. 1, when in a great rage. As the situation demanded, the other strings were used, No. 5 being amiably conversational and supplying the place of a discriminating adjectival vocabulary.

No. 2. Felipe Guzman, the Spanish Bishop of the island, in canonicals of spotless white, with a voice whose softness belied his face, which was fat in keeping with his person, while his eyes, having a peculiar wall effect, never seemed to look into yours. It was to him, he said, a source

of great gratification that statecraft should have its turn. Statecraft should go hand in hand with strong measures, which were the most merciful under existing conditions. The natives were children, with half-formed minds. They had mistaken liberty for license, and as a father to them he hoped for a consistent policy. For any measure of self-government they were quite unfit.

No. 3. Don Luiz Cortina, called by the natives "The Thinker," a slight, short man with a smooth face, an aquiline nose, bright little eyes, and white teeth, with thin lips drawn over them. He had a slight impediment of speech and a halting of one leg when he walked. In blood he could have been only a quarter native. A lawyer, once a Spanish official, again an agitator against the Spaniards, a graduate of the University of Salamanca, he was known as the best educated man in the Islands. His attitude was one of scholastic disinterestedness and he seemed to agree generally with the Bishop, though once, when neither the Bishop nor the Governor was looking, he gave the Bishop a glance of hate and his teeth showed catlike under his drawn lips. But he was a man of many hates, and soon the Governor was to be numbered among them.

No. 4. Eugene Willard Parkowitz, the leading hemp dealer and foreign merchant. A pronouncedly British subject, he spoke with a decided English accent, was confident of His Excellency's success, hoped that things could be kept quiet for the hemp season, and was convinced, from his ex-

perience in India, that a little "side" was very important in keeping down the natives. Parkowitz's British firm often reminded him to keep out of politics and not to trade with the insurgents. He was suspected of both offenses.

No. 5. Major Edward Staton, about to receive his number as Lieutenant-Colonel; tall, well built, known as "Ramrod" to the natives, and as the "brains of the staff" to the army; a silent man, except when with Mrs. Staton, as they talked things over in their rooms.

No. 6. William Winterburn Worth, missionary of the Society of the Word, no larger than the average Tongal himself, with a pleasant voice and a quick, nervous manner. He was Parkowitz's favorite joke. "Another example of the half-baked missionary fools who couldn't earn their living at home," expressed the view of that old Eastern expert over his whisky and soda. "A disturbing element," said the Bishop. "I like the little man, I do, bless him!" said Father Tim.

No. 7. Arthur Thompson, a young American mining engineer, who was interested in the coal mines of the island.

No. 8. George Horswell, a young Australian, Parkowitz's assistant, whom Parkowitz had tried in vain to have the firm discharge. His superior had led him an unpleasant life, and he and Thompson were fast friends, both hoping for "something better" when the island was pacified.

And Father Tim we know. Two other charac-

ters not present, for a very evident reason, may as well be mentioned at once. Campo, a full-blooded native, was the head of the insurrecto forces in the field. Pardo was a brigand chief, an iconoclast, who took orders from no one and fought after his own fashion. Could you have known the native inner circle, you would have heard it whispered that Cortina's were the brains back of Campo.

All eight of that catalogue of first influences, and all the others of which they were typical, depended for their presence upon the bayonet, the Governor saw. Was there no one to speak for those brown and forbidding faces he had seen in the street? Was there no full-blooded native friend of America? he asked the General, and the General took the Governor to headquarters to show him the lone Tongal in the whole benighted island who, in the General's words, was worth the powder to blow him to the hell place.

" Enrico, the new Governor, Mr. Harden! " said the General, introducing a young Tongal in khaki, who sprang up from his desk with military precision.

" Excellency! " breathed Enrico, bowing to the knee.

" Enrico fought me once, didn't you, Enrico? " (String No. 5, the amiable one.)

" Yes, General," with another bow.

" Yes, he fought well," continued the General. " Now he is for me. Now you're good Indian, eh? "

“ Yes, General, I am very happy. I love my new country, America! ” with the bow.

“ I’ve put him on salary. I tell you he gets me more information than all the staff. He talks with the natives and comes and tells me, don’t you, eh? ”

“ Yes, General. It is a great honor if I can help you against your enemies,” with the punctilious bow.

“ And I’ll tell you, by (String No. 3)! ”—here the General was giving the civil authorities still another one of the thrusts which the Governor had heard smiling,—“ he knows his place. He’s no town-meeting, agency, good-as-you-are Indian. He doesn’t think he ought to mess with the officers. You know your place, and you keep it, eh, Enrico? ”

“ Yes, General. You are my benefactor who teaches me everything,” with the bow.

There, by the jumping, hyphenated profanities—Strings Nos. 3 and 4,—you had one loyal native and the only one on the whole damned island that ought to be sunk and washed of all the bare-backed, hornet human kind that called it theirs. Yes, by the Almighty!

You could not help enjoying Prairie Fire if you looked at him in the right light, a quality which the Governor had infinitely, or he could not have remained in such invariable good-humor. That evening when he went to his room he found that he had a native follower of his own. The moon-faced boy who asked to carry the Big Fel-

low's suit-case had unpacked his trunk and laid out a suit of white on the bed.

"I look after you! You let me look after you, Great Bigness! No pay. Little rice," said he to the giant who held his imagination captive.

"All right! Go ahead! You seem to know pretty well how to do it!" said Big.

The highest of Benito's privileges was to dust the Governor's desk, which was to him a kind of throne. It was a broad, flat-topped desk of native hardwood in the end of a series of three great, high-ceilinged rooms, with shining hardwood floors and windows and casements always open to let in any vagrant breeze that rippled the heat of the day. Over it, on the rear wall, had been the portrait of a former Spanish Governor. He was quite a famous man, this Governor, who drove a thousand natives into the sea as a punitive measure. That portrait the Big Fellow removed to the hall, and in its place he put a steel engraving of Lincoln.

Here he held audience for all who would come of their own volition or at his call. Evidence on which he thought he could rely one day was confounded by that of the next. Boss Birch seemed a jewel of simplicity, directness, and truth compared to the Presidentes with whom he had to deal. But there was one most important Presidente he had not met yet—the Presidente of Toll, whom the natives called Don Francisco in a way to attract the Governor's attention.

"A disturber," said the Bishop.

“A man of strength, but always against any government and hypocritical,” said Dr. Cortina.

“Damned rebel!” said the General.

“A good business man, but ought to be exiled,” said Parkowitz.

“A full-blooded native, with much power among the natives and against us,” from Major Staton, when pressed; for he was careful, as a member of the General’s staff, not to express private opinions.

Meanwhile, all the news the Governor had from that trailless land, infested with hate, was of many small fights, bitter and vindictive, and of plotting native leaders with the dangerous little education, who incited rebellion with argument and with threats of assassination and collected taxes when khaki backs were turned.

“We have the Americans beaten!” they whispered in at the doorways. “The white giants grow weary. Their people at home will no longer bear the expense. Yes, countrymen, and we have good news from America. Here is what their statesmen say! You may read it yourselves, or we will read it for you. ‘Keep on fighting and you will be free,’ they say. Now, as a last resort, the tyrants in power in America have sent a big, soft, unknowing man who palavers. Doesn’t that show that they are afraid? Having failed to find us with rifles, he would draw us into the open and trick us with smiles! And remember, if they win they will treat you like negroes—as we treat the *negrito* dwarfs of the mountains!”

A people bearing in blood and in spirit the Spanish memory, saw a new set of rulers without Spanish politeness. Every brown face smiled a polite greeting, learned from Spain, and every native hand was secretly against the Americans. Reprisals bred reprisals. Treachery had made the men in khaki in the jungle, whose temples beat with the heat and dull resentment over comrades boloed in the dark, indiscriminate when anything clad in a white shirt appeared in front of them. They were fighting an enemy which, in the phrase of Prairie Fire, would not "stand up to be killed;" enemies who hid their rifles on the column's approach, stood so many gaping peasants as it passed, and straightway became imps under cover of night.

When the Governor tried to explain that a better régime was to come, a veil seemed to be drawn over the native mind. After weeks in the capital, sore with baffling experience, he made a tour. From the thickets the people came to the towns and villages to look on the American giant as they would at a show. He told them of how they were to elect their own mayors and councilmen and what this meant; of how teachers were coming from home to teach them English and arithmetic and writing, so they would know how to govern themselves. But they asked no questions, they exhibited no interest, while they made Spanish bows and distrusted all pretensions after their experience with Spanish proclamations.

Parkowitz, local type of the clerk from Tooting,

was laughing in his sleeve and quoting the words of the poet about the East being the East sneeringly to the little foreign colony.

“White solidarity and a superior manner the Americans must learn,” he said, “and I doubt if they have the savey, you know, anyway. As for this Governor, I fancy he’d do very well in America, where everybody is better’n anyone else, you know.”

The Big Fellow returned to the capital depressed, but not discouraged. Not a single man, so far as he knew, had he really convinced of his sincerity, while at home everyone seemed to take his sincerity for granted. The one Presidente, Francisco Martinez, of Toll, whom he had most wanted to meet had been absent in a distant province, buying hemp.

“If I could only get a single real native, a leader among his people,” as the Governor said to Kiddy, in talking of the situation, “who knew how to reach them, that would be a beginning.” He paced up and down the hardwood floors, making them creak. “We are right and we must win in the end;” and after another turn: “The schools will help.” In blue moments he always harked to them. “They will reach the children. I have great hope of the teachers, and they will be here soon.”

Why not ask Benito about this man of Toll? Usually, Benito’s only answer to any question was: “I no know politics. I work for you, Great Bigness.” But at mention of Martinez the first

disciple, as the Governor called Benito, broke into a torrent of words:

“Don Francisco! There is a man!” Benito cried. “Don Francisco he all Tongal like me! No Spaniard! Not little drop of Spaniard! He can fight like I do, and I can fight, too, Great Bigness!”

Benito squared his shoulders soldier-fashion and dramatically opened his shirt:

“I get this fighting,” he said. “It not hurt, it come so quick. It only sting like an insect bite and I fall down, and I get well again.”

He pointed to the little white spot on his breast where a Krag bullet, fired by the soldiers of the first landing party, had passed through his chest. What chases, what marching, what weariness there had been since that day!

“Don Francisco, that old man he is savage—he is the strongest one in Bar. A Spanish officer and Don Francisco’s daughter—yes—and Don Francisco, who deal in the hemp and harm nobody, he kill that officer; yes, and he make war and he make war so hard the Spaniard he make peace. Anything he would do, this old man, who look so simple and so calm! He fight against you, Great Bigness, for his people. I fight with you, Great Bigness, yes, because I see your laugh and smile, oh, so big! and you are a man that act good, just like the proclamation read good.

“Oh, the proclamation from the Spanish—proclamation, proclamation, so beautiful and the men so bad, who do nothing in the proclamation!

How can my people believe you are different, as I do? No, no! Don Francisco he not believe. He prepare; he think, so calm, that old man. He make war by and by; yes, Great Bigness. You watch him! He not afraid! He not run away! He fight hard when the time come. I no know politics! I serve you!" and he went on putting clothes in a drawer.

Don Francisco was worth knowing and worth winning, the Big Fellow thought; but he would not send for him, he concluded. No. It were better that the meeting, which was bound to happen, were of Don Francisco's own volition. With only an occasional question about the old Presidente of Toll, the Governor kept on listening to the General, the Bishop, and the other special pleaders. He little knew of the bargain for rifles that Parkowitz, upholding white men's solidarity, was driving, or of the visits of the only loyal damned one in all the damned island with his budgets of news of military plans to the house of Dr. Cortina, that sleepless one, who sent his unsigned messages far and wide and relished the new order of leniency as an opening for great things.

XXVII

THE SECOND DISCIPLE

BENITO, Guardian of His Great Bigness and by himself so named, sat at the entrance of the Palace, a motionless, squatting figure on a mat, pulling a punka and watching with half-closed eyes, through the blazing light of the square, the sentry of the Sixty-fifth pacing slowly in front of the barracks, mango vendors listless or napping in the shade of the cathedral with its splotches of moss-grown walls, and a carabao with a melancholy, pendulous stride drawing a cart along the street.

Presently, around the corner came a thick-set, elderly native under the shade of a large umbrella. His appearance was that of some well-to-do merchant or small planter of the rural districts who had not fallen into the habit of the European cut of duck. He was sturdy of build, with a bronzed skin pockmarked, though not unpleasantly, high cheekbones, thin lips, and an open manner that was winning. Somewhat hesitatingly he went up the steps of the Palace. The absence of any functionary in uniform made him doubtful if these eccentric Americans had

not chosen a new entrance to the Governor's chambers.

"I am the Presidente of Toll, señor, the young keeper of the door," he said, with a Spanish bow, "and I hope you find yourself well."

It might be worth while to get a little information from the boy before proceeding, he concluded.

"You have come to see the Governor?" asked Benito. "The Kiddy of His Great Bigness is inside. He is the true keeper of the door."

But Don Francisco did not act on the suggestion.

"They say this newcomer is larger than any two Spaniards—larger, even, than the Major Staton."

"He is the Great Bigness," Benito answered, enigmatically. "Did you not see him when he went to Toll?"

"No. I was away buying hemp."

"Buying hemp?" Benito spoke with a trace of the rising inflection, never lifting his eyelids, and continuing to pull the rope that kept the hanging fan of cloth moving back and forth over the Governor's desk.

"Yes, buying hemp!" the old Presidente repeated, softly. "All through the land they are talking of him. They say he has a laugh which makes the palm leaves shuckle, but it is not the laugh of thunder; it is the laugh of cheer. Some say, too, that it is the laugh of the surface of things and of little understanding."

“ It is the laugh of His Great Bigness,” answered Benito.

“ They say he wears no uniform except a white suit and he shakes hands with everybody, walks about without an orderly, and anybody may go in to see him. How can he really be a Governor? ”

“ He is the Great Bigness.”

“ How, then, does he rule? ”

“ With the laugh, with this,” and Benito laid his hand on his heart, “ and with these,” Benito pointed to his eyes. “ It will be well for you, O Señor Presidente of Toll! to watch the eyes closely. And, señor, the Great Bigness can also be the Great Anger.”

“ They say, when he walks up and down of nights, that the floors creak like the bamboo cluster in a storm and the Palace shakes.”

“ The church would shake if his eyes should will it,” Benito said. “ He is the Great Bigness.”

“ You answer not my questions. You are deep for a boy.”

“ He is the Great Bigness—this answers all questions! ”—as it did for Benito. “ I know him well.”

Who should know him better? Did not Benito insist on sleeping on a mat outside the Big Fellow's door? which was no hardship in a land where nearly everybody sleeps on a mat on the floor, and the few who do not, sleep on one drawn taut between the four posts of a bed.

“ He is the Great Bigness,” Benito kept on, with monkish, prayer-wheel, Eastern monotony.

“ You cannot measure him or think of him the way you say. But I no know politics. I serve His Great Bigness, who is like the proclamations read.”

“ Like the proclamations read! ” repeated the old man, smiling to himself. “ All servants are faithful to the bread of their masters,” he thought.

“ Yes, like the proclamations read! Here is the Kiddy. Speak with him, the true keeper of the door.”

Kiddy Witherbee, dapper in his suit of duck, appeared in the doorway, and Benito, who had not stopped pulling the punka, went on watching the sentry.

“ I came to pay my respects to His Excellency, the Governor,” said Señor Francisco Martinez. “ I am the Presidente of Toll. I missed him, señor, when he was at Toll on his way to the northern provinces, as I was away buying hemp.”

Yet another reason had kept the Presidente from being present. Something in his nature revolted at fawning on the head and front of oppression. Curiosity, born of the many stories of the Big Fellow he had heard, in part brought him to the Palace. Another factor was that he knew that his absence from Toll had made him a marked man in the mind of one Major Staton.

Kiddy welcomed him as respectfully and beneficently as a Yamen runner would receive a mandarin.

“ I am glad, indeed, sir, to know you,” said

that wise secretary. "The Governor will be most pleased. He wants to meet you and talk with you, I know. The Bishop is with him now, but I don't think he will stay much longer. Won't you come in and have a chair?"

Kiddy stood to one side to let the Presidente enter his own office, but just then the Bishop, fat and slow-moving, came out of the Governor's chamber. His wall eyes looked to Don Francisco as if expecting an obeisance and met a glance of unblinking, serene dislike. After he had passed, the old Presidente, a good Catholic, crossed himself.

"He's not any Bishop to me!" he said to Kiddy, with a frankness that was a startling departure from the habit of polite Tongalese indirection. "But I like your Padre Maloney;" which was no surprise except in its further expression of candor from a Tongal. "I said to him, when my people win their independence I hope they may have many priests like you."

"The Governor is an old friend of Father Maloney's father," said Kiddy, making use of a diplomatic opportunity as he opened the swinging doors.

As they entered, the Big Fellow's face lighted with that spontaneous pleasure which never seemed to abate, whether it was friend or stranger who came. From every visitor he hoped for some information that would help him in his work.

"Don Francisco! I want to know you! I want to have a long talk with you!"

The old Presidente of Toll had made a bow, but not an obeisant one, as he announced himself with a serene dignity. Yes, this new Governor was immense, bigger than any man he had ever seen; and that smile of which he had heard was neither Spanish nor formal, but generous and pervasive; and that hand that came out to meet his had a grip that did not let go, but drew the visitor in pleasant welcome to a seat beside the desk.

“When you honored Toll with your presence it was my ill fortune to be absent buying hemp,” the Presidente said.

“Then it is my good fortune to have a visit from you now,” the Governor responded. “I have heard many stories to your credit. You were not afraid to make war when you had a just cause.”

“I fought for my family honor,” Don Francisco observed, discreetly. “This was before the Americans came, with different ideals from the Spaniards.”

The Big Fellow began to ask most surprising questions about Toll. He remembered the names of leading citizens. He knew which land grew the best hemp. All his “talk it over together” talent was genially in play, while the old Presidente studied this new species covertly. Directly, he heard the happy laugh, with its true and natural ring, while his own experienced eyes watched the Governor’s, of a different color than those to which he was used. They puzzled him

with their clear grey. But the big man's heart? That was the third thing which Benito had mentioned. That was the thing you might not see.

"By pleasant words while his soldiers kill," thought the Presidente of Toll. "When there is peace the words will not be pleasant. Then we will be negroes. Yes, an old man like myself can see ahead."

Presently two more callers appeared. General! Prairie Fire Strong shook the old Presidente's hand gingerly.

"Not late, I hope, Governor," he said, mopping his brow. "Talk about the hinges (String No. 5)—they may stick on in hell, but they're melted off here! What we ever wanted to take this (String No. 3) country for I can't see."

"The Major here is a little jealous," the Governor said to Don Francisco, introducing Staton. "He is only second biggest, now."

But the Major, who was young and active and went among the provinces a good deal, already knew the old Presidente, whom he greeted warmly, receiving in return an appreciable glance of admiration, if not of favor. Then Don Francisco made his bow to the Governor, accepting the arrival of the officers as a signal that it was time for him to withdraw.

"Excellency, I thank you for your politeness. I wish you good health," he said, still discreetly, for he could not honestly wish the Governor success.

"Oh, no! We don't let our visitors go away at

tiffin time, Don Francisco. Here, put another place, Chang," said the Governor to the Chinese boy, who had just announced luncheon.

"Al-li." Chang had learned by experience always to have two or three extra places ready.

What did this new Governor mean, inviting him to the family meal with General Prairie Fire in as friendly a way as if they were neighbors? Don Francisco's recollection flew back to the night in the field when he had been asked to dine with the staff by one of its members and the General had refused to eat with him. The next day he had begun to buy rifles for the "men out in the long grass."

"You invited *me* to tiffin, too, Governor!" the General said, sharply. Here was a principle for which he had stood, and Mrs. General even more valiantly, when he was military Governor.

"Of course. We're five, with Kiddy. Don't worry, General. There'll be curry enough to go around," returned the Big Fellow, "and Don Francisco can tell us a lot about Toll."

Red and angry, the General straightened himself in the best military manner that his corpulency and sagging shoulders would permit.

"This is a social and not an official matter," he muttered, thickly, "and, by (String No. 1), I never did sit down to eat with a nigger, and never will!"

"Pardon, Governor, pardon!" Don Francisco picked up his hat and umbrella, and he spoke most politely, if grimly, his lips closing

on his words in a thin, ashy line. But the Governor put his hand on the old man's shoulder to restrain him and Don Francisco saw something in the grey eyes he had not seen before.

"General, if any customs due to race association at home influence you in this matter, let me say that Don Francisco is a Tongal and less a negro than many a Spanish grandee."

"They're all niggers to me and it's time to teach them their places. Come on, Staton!" the General commanded from the doorway.

Staton, always stiff of figure from West Point training in spite of himself, seemed to be considering. A slight flicker of disgust with his superior may have passed over his face. His square jaw indicated that he could have and hold an opinion of his own. On this occasion he stood between loyalty to the General and his convictions.

"As you say, General, it is a social and not an official matter," the Governor remarked, quietly. "Major, I hope you will stay."

"I certainly will. I want to talk with Don Francisco." The Major spoke as quietly as the Governor.

"Tring-trang-thir-r-r!" sang the swinging blind doors, as the General, hammering the hardwood with his heels, passed along the hall. He went immediately to Mrs. General. A "nigger" invited to tiffin by the Governor! His own Major insubordinate! This was what came of the town-meeting business! This was what came of send-

ing out politicians! There would be a massacre one day in this island that the world would remember! He took a liberal drink of rye, which only made his face the redder, while he choked in his rage over the cold chicken which Mrs. General served him.

But to return to the Presidente of Toll. He had not failed to notice the phenomenon that the Major took his cue from the Governor. It was not unpleasant, either, to take tiffin seated on the right hand of His Great Bigness. Another place was made for the Lord High Admiral of the hundred-tonner, who came in at the last moment.

“How’s the navy?” the Governor asked.

“Topping! If you’ll give me enough grease I’ll run the *Paktowan* up to the square so you can see her from the window. Does well enough on the level; not enough horsepower for hill climbing. I went over a bar yesterday where you could see the sand above the water. Jumped it! I’ll teach her to take a hurdle yet.”

The Governor laughed heartily. He always liked to have Clancy drop in. For one thing, Clancy reminded him of Willy in impetuosity of spirits; for another, he liked to keep a close eye on the Ensign for any signs of mischief. There was no more telling what the Lord High Admiral might do with the *Paktowan* than what The Hummer might do with *The Sentinel*.

“I suppose the navy,” put in Major Staton, “is claiming that the *Paktowan* is doing all the

work and not admitting that the army is present, at all."

"No, Major. How could we when we tow the army about from place to place and watch it get seasick?" Without waiting for any reply from the Major, Clancy turned smartly to the Governor for the object of his call. "I got clear to Laglag with her yesterday, Governor."

"The deuce you did! Aren't you going to eat any tiffin?"

"No. I'll tiffin aboard, thanks, after we're under way. If you're willing—and I believe I can do it—I shall try to take her up to Toll."

"To Toll?" queried the Presidente, with a covert glance at Clancy.

"The Admiral gave me *carte blanche*, sir, as you know," Clancy continued. "But as this is a kind of exploring trip and a civil matter I thought I'd ask you."

"No wonder. If he hadn't, like Lord Nelson you'd take it!" said the Governor.

"Never can tell when you'll need information, sir. Once I have made the trip I'll be able to go a-humming if I'm needed."

"All right; but mind, no mischief—no fighting!"

"No, sir, thank you. Good-by, Don Francisco;" and the Lord High Admiral of the hundred-tonner bolted.

She was a devil, that little gunboat, as the Presidente knew by reputation. Around the bend of a stream she would come, and then rat-tat-tat

from her Colt's automatic—and look out, unless you wanted a line of holes punched across your anatomy.

Don Francisco did not again betray his deep curiosity as to whether or not she could navigate to Toll. With his napkin tucked under his chin he was smiling benignly and laboring with his knife and fork tentatively. It was pleasant to sit between the army and the navy in the councils of state; yet flattery would not fool him, he told himself. He was too old a hand.

“Excellency, may I ask you some questions?” he said. “There is much that puzzles between the benevolent assimilation and the——”

“Killing,” assented the Governor. “Ask any questions you please,” which was also surprising.

“In your country does the General Strong come from what you call the more aristocratic family—more aristocratic than——”

“More aristocratic than the Major's or mine, you mean?” the Governor asked, divining what lay behind the inquiry.

“Yes, yes, if you please. I would not be impolite, Excellency, and I do not know the American customs.”

“Ask me questions all the afternoon and I will answer them,” the Governor responded, in expansive enthusiasm. “Yes, and answer them all night.” For at last he had met something besides polite indirection. At last he had met an inquiring mind. “I don't know the General's family; do you, Major?”

“ No. I——” the Major began, and his eyes met the Governor’s in a glance which Don Francisco did not fail to note. He smiled a little to himself. He was having a most enjoyable tiffin.

“ And in America is it true that the Secretary of War, he does not wear a uniform? ”

“ Yes, it is quite true.”

“ Ah! ” He shook his head wonderingly.

“ And is it true that he is not a soldier? ”

“ He is not a soldier. He is appointed by the President.”

“ Ah! And the President, he is elected by the army? ”

“ No, by the people.”

“ And——” but the Presidente of Toll, as he came to the point of his questioning, forgot to take care in the use of unfamiliar tools. With a sudden “ Ph-h-h! ” he put his handkerchief up to his mouth.

“ Excellency,” he spluttered, “ the fork I do not know and I am very stupid; but the knife is so sharp. The Spaniards complain of the same thing about the English knife.”

“ Try the Tongal way,” said Kiddy Witherbee, true and solemn diplomatist. “ Fingers are better for rice. Use them, by all means.”

This made Don Francisco more at ease as a trencherman; but he determined to learn not only how to load the fork with rice, but to bear it without loss of cargo in transit to the destination. If others could, why not he with practice? He would show these Americans that he could be

as well mannered as they. But first he would show the Governor that he was no fool. Now he asked that poser he had in mind when the accident occurred:

“ And why don't the officers put in whoever they want for the President till another army is raised to beat them? ”

To the clerks in the War Department this suggestion that the Chief of Staff march over with a regiment and take possession of the White House is preposterous enough. But to make the Presidente understand this was another thing. The civilization that he knew rested on the basis of armed power.

“ Why, they don't! They couldn't! It is against the law! ” Even the Governor was momentarily thrown out of administrative equilibrium. “ There was Lincoln, one of our Presidents, for example. ” He turned toward the portrait visible in his office.

“ Oh! That is the—— ” Governors were Excellencies and Presidents were not Majesties, Don Francisco had heard, but they must be something “ —the—the Honorable Lincoln! ” he concluded.

“ Yes. Lincoln was once Commander-in-Chief of a million armed men, prepared with all the munitions of war. ”

“ Didn't he wear a uniform? ” Official power without a uniform was scarcely believable. It was like being civilized without wearing clothes. It was against custom and precedent.

“ No. When his term was about to expire, for

the sake of the work he was doing he wanted to succeed himself. Yet he had to go to the people and get a majority of all their votes for re-election."

This was a pretty big one for the Presidente of Toll to swallow. He was inclined to think that the Americans had their ways of lying, with the same intent as the Spanish ways—to deceive and control the natives.

"Why, Excellency, why? I do not wish to be impolite, Excellency, but you said I might ask questions. Ah!"—perhaps this was the real explanation—"did some other man that wanted to be the President have a big army, too?"

"No. His was the only army."

"Why did he not say to the people, I choose to stay? How could they have stopped him?"

"They could, easily."

"They could?" This was, of a truth, too much. "Does not the army obey? The army in Takar does." Don Francisco leaned forward with real Occidental show of interest. Perhaps he had struck on the reason for the report that soon a new party would be "in power" in America. The insurrectoes had only to keep on fighting, he had heard, to make a change of American Presidents.

"No. They would not obey. The law, the Constitution, would not permit. All that is bred in us as Americans would not permit. Congress would not permit. The soldiers would have concluded that the President was mad or would

have laughed at him—but wait! Let me explain this more slowly.”

It was nothing to be cynical about in the dawning days of the twentieth century, this picture of the Big Fellow trying to put the essence of the thousand books and all the meaning of the complex system of upgrowth of constitutional government from its English origin in civil control, which is second nature to us, into comprehensible form for a mind, touched with no outside interest except Spanish colonial policies, which had spent all its days in a little barrio of the hot, out-of-the-world island of Bar.

Kiddy Witherbee went to say to callers that the Governor was engaged, and, unless they preferred to wait and take their chances, probably they would be wiser to come to-morrow. Plowing, plowing, plowing! Beginning at the foundation of the great thing he would expound, the Governor kept on with his exposition, answering all questions with genial patience. He was trying as hard to win the Presidente of Toll to his side as he had tried to win Hiram Hobber, on another occasion. The pity is that Hiram could not be present to observe his protégé “on the heathen job!”

“The corruption! There is a great deal of it in the American cities,” the persistent objector continued, repeating what he had heard from Parkowitz and Cortina. “They buy the voters.”

“Yes, there is corruption,” the Governor returned. “You see, Don Francisco, we have not

finished. We are working, ourselves. Only we are a little further ahead than you. We would like to give you the advantage of what we have. We will be the book; you will have to be the life and experience, yourselves. Though there is corruption, it can be stopped by the citizens. The power is all with them, without firing a shot."

"The constitutional rights of the minority!" mused the old Presidente. That phrase which the Governor had used more than once in his explanation stuck in Don Francisco's mind. "Did not the Honorable Lincoln, with his army of a million men, ever abuse the—the constitutional rights of the minority?" He repeated the phrase in full, as if it were a talisman.

"No. He would not. In fact, Congress and the checks and balances I have been explaining made it impossible, had he chosen to."

"The Honorable Lincoln was a very remarkable man," Don Francisco said, tentatively, determined not to be drawn into praise of any American statesman against his will. "I would like to look at the Honorable Lincoln closer."

It was four o'clock. They had been three hours at the lesson. Major Staton, a listener, who had sent word to the barracks that he was detained, followed the Governor and his guest into the other room, still inclined to remain as long as there was no sign that he was out of place. Don Francisco looked steadfastly at the portrait of the great President.

"The Honorable Lincoln has a good face,"

he concluded. "It is most different from the Spanish Governors'—very! Was the Honorable Lincoln born of the aristocracy that made him become so powerful? I should like to hear how it was he rose and who his people were. But, Excellency, I have made the questions like the child. I thank you for your——"

"No. I am here just for this thing. Please stay!" the Governor responded. "I will tell you about Lincoln."

In chairs on the shady side of the broad veranda overlooking the square, with the lengthening shadow of the cathedral lying across its blaze, the Big Fellow talked about Lincoln's youth, which he was able to do most convincingly. When he stopped the old man looked at the Governor frankly and said, suddenly:

"Excellency, you have been frank with me. I will be frank with you. I was not buying hemp. I went to the coast to arrange for a cargo of rifles."

"Yes, so I knew," the Governor returned. "Or, at least, I had it from the Major."

The Presidente gave the Major another glance of admiration. A second thought made him ashamed of his perspicacity. The big Governor was hypnotizing him.

"How, if you knew it—how is it that you do not arrest me?" he asked, suddenly. Of course they had not known it. They said so to make believe they had. He had been giving his position away. They would never let him out of

town now. Why, they were not children! Here he was speaking straight to the point according to the rule these Americans taught, instead of around the bush and down in the well, and they had drawn him into their own game and trapped him.

“We had not the evidence to convict,” said the Governor.

“But with your army you could have thrown me into jail. You could have applied the water cure!” and he thought of General Prairie Fire.

“That would have done no good in the end, without the evidence.” It was automatic the way the Big Fellow reasoned. There was something easy and simple about his system. It did save a lot of traveling.

“Besides, you wouldn’t have landed the rifles,” the Major said, “not unless the *Paktowan* blew up and the legs of the men of Company B were paralyzed.”

This Major—he was the silent one. He was the army that obeyed the man without uniform, who did not arrest a man who was buying rifles. Don Francisco was in the midst of strange things.

“I walked to Toll once from Takar, between eleven at night and seven A.M.,” Staton added, to change the subject.

“You walked!” The Presidente was amazed, even after all he had heard of American marching. But the Major looked quite equal to the task.

“Yes. That’s better than liver medicine.

When I arrived in the outskirts of the town I bought something to eat of a woman who kept a little shop and then fell sound asleep under a tree where I had sat down, and it was noon when the woman woke me."

The muscles of the Presidente's mouth twitched. There were some things he knew that the Major did not know. He could return news for news.

"If she had not waked you, you would have been boloed," he said. "She remembered, Major, how you brought a broken-legged boy in from the jungle. The fellow in the bush, he did not care to face your revolver when you were awake."

Staton said gratefully that he would thank the woman some day. Then there was a spell of silence. Don Francisco was looking at his hands and weaving his fingers together.

"Excellency," said he, "when we first heard of the Americans' coming we thought that you were to deliver us of all our troubles. Then we heard that you were going to stay and organize us into working gangs to make money for the trusts. Spain's authority had gone. The wild element gathered into bands. The sober citizens tried to keep the peace, while we awaited the arrival of your troops. When they came, the General Prairie Fire he was in command. The sober people began to believe that all that the agitators had said was true."

"Are we exploiting you when we are keeping

Chinese contract labor out?" asked the Big Fellow.

"No. That is true"—and therein lay the real animosity of Parkowitz. "You would make it bar for the Tongals."

"Yes, it is your land. You must be protected until you have developed efficiency."

Don Francisco exhibited a skepticism which might have been called well-bred if he were of Fifth Avenue.

"But do you do this just for the love of mankind?" he asked. Such altruism was not in his mental horizon. "I know not American human nature. Our people cannot believe that you have no dark and selfish aim."

"Yes, a very dark and selfish aim," laughed the Governor. "If you develop and succeed you cannot do so without helping others."

The old man was silent. Unused brain cells were coming into play.

"I see!" he said, finally. "If I grow more hemp I will buy more goods. Everybody prospers. If I grow bayonets I will buy only powder—and powder does not pay. And, Excellency, I have another question. Will you send away General Prairie Fire?"

"That is for the President to say. The General is under the President's command," was the answer. "I hope to get along with fewer troops, and I am learning."

Don Francisco nodded to himself affirmatively, his brow lowering.

“General Prairie Fire he makes recruits. He is easily fooled. He——” and the old man stopped himself. Anyone taking note of Major Staton would have noticed that he was gripping the arm of his chair rigidly. But he said nothing.

“Still another question, Excellency, if you please.” This was the pivotal inquiry. “It is the priests. Have you seen the Bishop? Should a bishop have so many children as he has? These men are not priests. In this out-of-the-world place we are forgotten, and one religious order farms out these islands. If you are here for our good, why do you not send away the bad priests and let us have the good priests, Excellency?”

“In America a Governor knows no church. His power is temporal. That of the church is religious.”

A government that could not order away priests! This was a corollary to the practice of a Governor who did not wear a uniform.

“Excellency,” he asked, with a show of fire, “will you support these priests with your bayonets?”

“I will protect them only when their lives are in danger.”

“You will not make us go to church to priests that are polygamists?”

“No.”

The old man took his points slowly. He would not go on to the next until the preceding one was clear in his mind. Now he considered this one a long time. His cigar went out. Playing the

witness rather than the pleader, the Governor waited on him.

“Your idea of the religion,” Don Francisco said, when he broke the silence, “is that it is a matter between a man’s soul and himself, is it not, Excellency? It is the thing of his hereafter. Government is for this earth, to let him work in peace and sleep without thought of being boloed, and for training the head. But the soul he must arrange for himself, as he pleases. Yes, I see. It seems simple and wise, yes, and far away from Bar and strange.”

Again he lapsed into thought, weaving his fingers in and out slowly, preoccupied and grim.

“The constitutional rights of the minority!” he repeated, getting the phrase correct and complete and confident that he had it for good. “The majority can do only what the law says. We go to the courts, Excellency, instead of buying rifles and sharpening our boloes. We do all the fighting with our heads. Excellency, you would teach us these things and protect us while we learn them? Excellency, they may assassinate me, but I think I am doing my best for our island. I am at your service.”

XXVIII

WANTED, A CHARMING LADY

IN a few hours the Big Fellow had learned more of the native mind from Don Francisco than from all the catalogued personalities of first influences since he had been on the island. Looking back over his experience, it seemed to him that he had enjoyed no first meeting and no first talk with a man as much since Theodore Dexter had taken him across the street from *The Beacon* office to the Promised Land. But how was he to make use of this new disciple who was to be his spokesman to the Tongals? He answered this question by proposing the governorship of the province of Takar.

Don Francisco was astounded. Did he hear aright? Was he, who had confessed himself a rebel, really being offered a place which had never been held by anyone except a Spaniard or a half-breed?

“Yes, by giving you Takar I shall have you near me. We can consult together,” the Governor explained.

“It is a great honor you do me, Excellency,” Don Francisco responded; and the old man was silent, thinking of the personal triumph of holding

that office which had been beyond his dreams. "But, Excellency," he continued, after a space, "it would not make the good politics for me to accept. You are a little too much like the Honorable Lincoln to understand the Tongals. All my enemies would say that having failed with the rifle you now use the dollar. They would say you had bought the Presidente of Toll and must have paid a good price for him."

"Suppose they do," answered the Governor, "we cannot stop slander. Time will prove the truth and all their talk will react on the slanderers."

"Yes, Excellency," mused Don Francisco, "but I would not like to leave my Toll and my people. I would like to begin by teaching the American idea in Toll first."

This pleased the Governor.

"I see! You would make Toll a nucleus for our work," he said.

"Yes, nucleus!" Here was a new word for Don Francisco. He repeated it to get the hang and sound of it. "Yes, nucleus for the constitutional rights of the minority. Is that right, Excellency?"

"It is, perfectly. And you will hold a municipal election at once?"

"So I think, Excellency. I will tell my people that I shall run for Mayor, myself, and I think my people will vote for me," concluded that boss of Toll, serenely.

"Without doubt you are the one for Mayor.

But you must let the people talk over candidates among themselves and choose their own councilmen."

"Yes, yes, Excellency." Don Francisco smiled knowingly, and the Governor was glad to see that smile; for he feared that his second disciple was to be a graven image, and in times of stress even more than times of cheer, Big did like smiling men around him. "Yes, Excellency, that is the good politics. What a talking there will be among my people! I hear them!" He actually chuckled. "If they choose the council and the council turns out bad they cannot blame me. I will what you call pass the buck, as your soldiers say when they sit in a circle and play at the cards. The council will get all the scolding."

"You already grasp the checks and balances of a democracy," said the Governor, "and you can tell them it is in their power to get a new lot of councilmen more to their satisfaction at the next election, without having to make war with their boloes."

"True, Excellency, true! And, Excellency, I have another idea! I would like to work with you in another thing. The schools they please me very much, and you will have an overseer with the high education from your country, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Excellency, I am a most presuming and ungrateful man," Don Francisco lapsed into the Oriental affectation of self-deprecation. "I refuse the office and yet I ask for the office. I would

like to assist the overseer by preparing the ground for the schools. It is in the rural districts we should begin. There the minds of the people are not spoiled. In the capital they have the many wrong things to unlearn before they can begin to learn the right things. When the country is won the capital is won."

"You shall be the assistant overseer. This is just the thing I wanted," the Governor told him.

"And, Excellency, I will go about in the country preparing the way for the teachers," continued Don Francisco.

"Then you will have to hurry, for they are expected inside of two weeks."

"Two weeks! That is too bad. Two months would be better. I would like to excite the curiosity of the people, and have a *fiesta* when the teachers arrive. Our people like the *fiestas*. I think two months will be the better politics."

"Two months it shall be, if I can arrange it," the Governor returned.

He wired immediately to Washington asking if the lot of teachers destined for Bar might not be, for the reason he gave, transferred to some other island. They might, was the answer, but with an exception. It seemed that one of them, a Miss Moore, had found passage for herself and rather than wait on the transport was already on the way by an inter-island steamer.

Now there are many Miss Moores in the world and this one was only a name on a cable form. It conveyed no more suggestion to the Governor,

who knew nothing of Ellen's plan, than if it had been Miss Smith or Miss Jones. Should they recall her, too? Washington asked.

This question the Governor took to Don Francisco.

"One, and a lady?" quoth the old Presidente, and was silent for a while.

"One, and a lady," repeated the Big Fellow. "Yes."

"Excellency, it is not the proper question, perhaps, but do you think she is a charming lady?"

"I hope she is efficient, but as to the other qualifications I would not undertake to say. I fear they aren't in the Civil Service requirements and that the Department would scarcely care to pass an opinion on so delicate a subject."

"No, that would not be the good politics for the the Department, I can see," said Don Francisco. "But I ask, Excellency, because it is most important to a plan I have. It is the beautiful plan. It fits into the one for the other teachers coming like my fingers—so!" he wove them together. "I know a place, Bowang, in the country, where the people are not spoiled. It is only two miles away from Takar, so it would be very easy to take the people to see it—this nucleus. There I would make the first school to show to everyone."

"I see! The model! Exhibit A! Don Francisco, you are a man after my own heart!" said the Governor.

"Yes, the Exhibit A of the schools." Don Francisco had a new expression. "It would be

to all the other schools what the nucleus of my Toll is to the constitutional rights of the minority. But the Tongals, they make much of the first impressions. You will know that because they so much honor the quick Clancy after what he did with the *Paktowan* in his first fight. So a charming lady would help very much, Excellency, even if she were not so wise or good a teacher as some plain ladies."

"Let's hope for the best, Don Francisco. Let us take the risk!" concluded the Governor, unwittingly speaking a word for Ellen.

"Very good, Excellency. Ah, I will make a new schoolhouse on a beautiful knoll on the river bank, to show the people how all the Tongals are to know how to read and write, instead of the few who use their little learning to fool the others, like Campo does. And we will have a portrait of the Honorable Lincoln over the blackboard, and proceed quite as if she were a charming lady"—which he was warranted in doing where Ellen was concerned.

"Excellency," said Don Francisco, as he rose to go, "I am always asking the questions and I have another which has caused me the very much thought, for my people are asking it and it is hard to answer. Why is it that the statesmen in America keep saying so all the insurrectoes can hear that if Campo keeps on fighting he will win?"

"They want to give up the islands at once."

"But then, Excellency, we would have no

schools. I would fight. We would all fight. Campo for a little time, he would be the ruler. Then if someone beat Campo, for a little time he would be the ruler. There would be no end, Excellency, no end! ”

“ That is true. But everyone at home has the right to speak as he pleases. A bad cause will speak itself out in time. We have to be patient.”

“ Was that the Honorable Lincoln’s way? ”

“ Yes.”

“ And he won the great war? ”

“ Yes.”

“ The Honorable Lincoln was a very remarkable man,” concluded Don Francisco, with a bow to the portrait; for he was still Oriental enough to personify any idea with a figurehead. “ I will tell our people that a few people in America make the big talk like the lazy fellow who sings loud and picks no hemp, and that your amiable Excellency is too busy getting in the crop to mind them.”

XXIX

THE THINKER AND THE TRADER

WORD that Don Francisco had been converted by the Governor traveled fast. It was news and great news to one Dr. Cortina, lawyer, graduate of the University of Salamanca, part Spanish and part Tongal, whom the natives called The Thinker; to one Parkowitz, that pronouncedly British subject, who kept certain personal accounts quite separate from those of the firm he represented; and to all and sundry plotters in the closets of the town and the jungles of the country who had had any association with the Presidente of Toll. Parkowitz sought Cortina at once.

“ My word! ” gasped the trader, thrown off his “ side ” which he thought was the distinguishing characteristic of a gentleman. “ The Governor’s not such an ass as not to pump him! If the old man should tell all he knew—my word! ’twould make a nasty mess! ”

“ It is a difficult situation,” said Cortina, softly. “ Have a whisky and soda, Parkowitz. I’ll have a mint. Yes, assuredly a most difficult situation for you.”

“ For *me*! I like that! You know it’s the other

way 'round! " said Parkowitz, chirking up a little. " I'm a British subject, and you are an American citizen or something of the sort, aren't you? "

" Their Supreme Court has not yet decided what we are," Cortina continued, sarcastically. " The Americans quibble over moral peccadilloes. They are a provincial people. They have not the gift for what the French call high politics."

He hitched his lame leg into a more comfortable position, licked the mint off his teeth and lips, and looked around the spacious room. There were a number of French etchings on the wall and tall Chinese vases in the corners.

" Yes," he resumed, with a grimace, " if Don Francisco should tell all he knows and he were of a mind he might break up my happy home. I never did believe that he was a true patriot," Cortina added, devoutly.

" No! " answered Parkowitz, with a grin.

" There is a way to take care of Don Francisco," Cortina resumed; but he did not say what it was. His eyes glittered, however. Then he drained his glass and called for his hat and stick. " We don't know that he has told anything," he continued. " What do you say to my feeling the official pulse? I'll go and have a chat with the Governor while you wait for me here."

" My word! He has a nerve! " thought Parkowitz, who settled down to pass the time until the return of The Thinker, whom he watched half limping along in the shade of the buildings and then up the steps of the Palace. " It's an artistic

of probing he can do if anybody can. . . . I
 I be glad to be back in old Mother England,
 re I can associate with honest men. . . . My
 d! I shouldn't be surprised to hear any time
 Don Francisco had been assassinated! "

reudly Cortina studied Kiddy's face when
 sked if he might see the Governor.

I am sure you may," answered Kiddy.
 ere's no one inside now."

is secretary had heard nothing unusual, any-
 , Cortina thought, as the doors were swung
 and The Thinker hitched his way in. The
 Fellow was as affable as usual to this visitor,
 was an intellectual puzzle to him. When
 ed beside the desk Cortina was profuse with
 ratulations.

Don Francisco is more valuable than anyone
 could be," he said. " Now, one who lives in
 a like myself would be mistrusted by the
 ves." Then he talked on in his soft manner,
 ing that Don Francisco, of course, had his
 udices. " And he ought to bring you a great
 of information," he concluded.

is was as near as the artistic prober could
 e to the inquiry he had in mind. It brought
 esponse from the Governor, except something
 at the coming of the teachers, the new school
 owang, and the election at Toll. Big was most
 eful. He included Cortina and everyone in the
 hter outlook since he had won Don Francisco.
 Excellency, I mistrusted the wisdom of your
 rous measures at first," said Cortina, " but I

begin to believe in them myself, thanks to your gift for making friends. My health will not let me take an active part, but I shall avail myself of saying a word for your policy whenever I can. Again, Excellency, I congratulate you."

"Thank you, doctor, thank you! We shall see Bar a peaceful, happy island sooner than we think."

Cortina withdrew all but convinced that the Governor had heard nothing to his discredit. Yet the big man nettled him. He found it hard to look into the calm, clear eyes for long and sometimes he thought that the Governor might be deeper than he imagined. At the head of the steps he stopped to speak to Benito, that immovable, squat figure.

"How is our little keeper of the door?" he asked, ingratiatingly. He had known Benito a long time and had always felt the boy's dislike.

"Happy as the palm leaves in a shower," was the answer, as the Guardian looked across the square and kept the punka going. His free hand was under his shirt; and, as if it had accidentally fallen, a revolver rolled out on the mat at his side.

"Our little keeper of the door is armed," said Cortina, concealing his uneasiness. "He is wise, as he protects a great man."

"His Great Bigness protects himself," answered Benito. "I study to shoot." He slipped his finger under the trigger, raised the revolver and pointed toward the square. "Doctor, do you

see that spot on the palm tree? Yes! Will the doctor watch it? ”

Benito fired and dust flew out of the trunk at one side of the spot.

“ Wonderful! ” exclaimed Cortina. “ Who taught you? ” He knew that no native could learn such accuracy of himself.

“ Ensign Clancy teach me, the quick Clancy who cannot be still. He shoots quick and ’most always hits. I watch the Major Staton and him. The Major Staton not so quick, but always hits. You must have the straight eye to shoot well. Men who have not the straight eye, they cannot shoot well. ”

At the sound of the shot, Kiddy Witherbee came hurrying out, and saw the smoking barrel in Benito’s hand.

“ Here, give that to me, Benito! What do you mean? ” he demanded.

But Benito held fast to his precious weapon.

“ Mind, now, you keep it only on condition that you never fire it again, here or in town, unless you are attacked,” Kiddy warned him. “ Do you promise? ”

“ I promise! I promise honest, the Kiddy! ” Benito answered, after a little hesitation. He slipped the revolver back under his shirt, the punka recommenced its swing, and Kiddy returned to his office. Cortina started down the steps. He was at the foot when Benito called to him, in a loud whisper:

“ Oh, yes, I shoot very well. If a snake bite

Don Francisco in the dark I think I could hit the head of the snake easily when the snake is out of town."

Cortina's only answer was a wry smile. How much did this boy know? No matter! The Governor was not the man to listen to a servant's whims or gossip.

Parkowitz had begun on his third whisky and soda when The Thinker, mounting the stairs to the main living floor of the house, appeared, calling for another mint.

"How was it?" Parkowitz asked.

Cortina shrugged his shoulders.

"No danger, I think. Smiled in the same manner as usual. Talked about his school-teachers like some great simpleton who is just out of the shell and thinks all the world as beautiful as the sky," returned the doctor.

"Did you ever hear such bally rot!" said Parkowitz. "Educating all these jungle barebacks!"

"The natives need a master, that is all," Cortina returned. "They can understand nothing of this Utopian programme. But, to my mind, all democracy is wrong. An autocracy is the true government—and I would like to be one of the autocrats! Why should hemp-pickers be taught abc's?"

"Quite right! A good whip-lash makes them work better," said Parkowitz. "But I say, it's not all over by a long way. Don Francisco has plenty of time to tell all he knows, if he hasn't al-

ready. What was that you were saying about taking care of him? ”

“ Oh, that would never do! ” answered Cortina; and he saw the glint on Benito’s revolver sight and the burst of dust from the palm tree. “ It would be too unpleasant,” he concluded, sardonically.

“ My word! but there’s the old duffer, now! ” exclaimed Parkowitz, nodding toward Don Francisco, who was coming across the plaza. He was making direct for Cortina’s house, and a moment later the sturdy figure appeared in the shadow at the head of the stairs. Cortina rose to receive him effusively.

“ Old comrade,” he said, “ we congratulate you on a rise in the world! When do you hold your election? When do you begin building your school at Bowang? ”

Don Francisco did not answer and he refused the chair which was placed for him.

“ It will not take me long to speak what I have to say,” he explained. “ I come straight to you, for that is the way the young Governor always does.”

“ Will you not have a mint? ” pursued Cortina. “ Do sit down, if only for a moment! ”

Cortina showed his nervousness; Parkowitz was tugging his moustache, for Don Francisco looked most forbidding. They realized that their careers were largely in his keeping.

“ Cortina, you and I have had the relations together, working for the cause; and, Parkowitz, I

have bought the rifles from you. Now I am through with all these things. I work for my Toll and for the Governor. But I come to tell you that I will tell the Governor nothing of all that has passed between us. You are safe. But in the future I am your enemy."

"Very handsome of you, I'm sure!" said Parkowitz.

"I am glad to have my idea of your character borne out," said Cortina.

But Don Francisco had no more to say. Having kept the faith among plotters, he turned on his heel in disgust.

When he was gone Parkowitz exclaimed wildly:

"That lets us out!" But it would never do for him to appear excited. He recovered his "side." "I never worried, anyway, being a British subject. I say, Cortina, when you've money enough to go to Spain and take life easy, why do you stay?"

"I have plans!" returned Cortina. "I like to play with the devil in me!"

"Nasty little beast!" thought Parkowitz. "Soon I'll be back in Mother England with my fortune, among honest men!"

Oh, they were both, these two characters, so true of the Bar of that day, and must be drawn as they are!

"And when are you going?" asked Cortina.

"I shan't be long now," Parkowitz returned.

But he still hoped to sell one more lot of rifles and close up the coming hemp season before he

retired for good. That deal consummated, he would soon be seen afternoons in Piccadilly, where they bother as little where your fortune comes from as on Fifth Avenue. He might have a bit of shooting in the season, too, and pose as a bronzed man of the world who has seen life in the tropics.

“By the way,” he went on, coming to business, “we’ve been—er—talking so much of this other thing that I forgot to ask if you landed that five hundred all right.”

“Prettily!” answered Cortina. “Prairie Fire sent Clancy and the *Paktowan* to Nogal Bay, while we did the trick at Bambang Bay—and Staton fumed!”

“Smart boy, that Enrico!” thought Parkowitz; and he said aloud: “You know, I can lay my hand on two thousand, all Mausers, and four hundred thousand rounds at Hongkong, and I have my eye on a tramp steamer that can bring them.”

“Two thousand, all Mausers!” mused Cortina, indifferently.

“I suppose that all this schoolma’am business and the rest of the bally brown brother rot has made you change your mind!” Parkowitz concluded.

“No. That’s all the more reason to go on. I have plans! plans!” said Cortina.

“Never could understand the nasty little beast,” thought Parkowitz.

“It’s a question of price,” continued Cortina.

“ But I think,” he added, with a leerish smile, “ that two thousand rifles ought to collect their cost off the people once we have them in hand. A question of price! If you’ll be reasonable, Parkowitz, we’ll talk.”

The evening was old before the bargain was driven with all details of purchase, transport, and cash payment at Hongkong on delivery. The pair were having a drink in sociable consummation of the deal when Enrico came in. He never visited Cortina except at night, for it was well to take ordinary precautions, even if Prairie Fire did tell his faithful informant to circulate in all circles and pick up all the news he could. Enrico joined them in a mint before the departure of Parkowitz, that apostle of white solidarity, feeling that this deal had made him very near, indeed, to his goal of Piccadilly.

“ Enrico! My Enrico!” said Cortina, affectionately. “ Two thousand rifles! Do you think we can have Clancy sent to Pading when they come? ”

“ Am I not the only damned one in the whole damned island? ” answered the faithful informant, confidently. Then he fired all the strings, with a native’s quickness for imitation, in such amusing mimicry of Prairie Fire’s manner that Cortina broke into a laugh.

“ Enrico, my Enrico,” said Cortina, “ with the fairy of democracy in the Palace and Prairie Fire at the barracks, I shall have work for you. When Don Francisco has his new government in

running well, perhaps Campo will—but
! ”

The Governor! ” interjected Enrico, suddenly. “ I do not like his eyes. Sometimes I think they see far and sometimes I think he waits—waits—and he and Major Staton are great aids.”

Nonsense! He sees school-teachers! ” answered Cortina. “ He is big and simple, that is

We have only to keep on and all the Americans will be called home by their own people.

My Enrico, I have been corresponding with that great American statesman. He encourages us to go on.”

Most impressed was that great American statesman. Cortina’s scholarly letter in a fine Spanish which he had offered as an exhibit to his fellow countrymen to prove how fit were the Tongals for government.

Two thousand rifles, my Enrico! We will let them pay for themselves. To-night I am saying out word to all our friends that the Governor bought Don Francisco for twenty thousand dollars and what the great American statesman showed me and some newspaper photographs of him and newspaper clippings from his speeches. Enrico, I shall be in that Palace yet and you shall have a General’s red trousers! ” which was the height of Enrico’s ambition.

I can do anything with Prairie Fire,” said Cortina, his confidence returning. “ Am I not the damned one in the whole damned island? ”

XXX

ELLEN ARRIVES

PADING, the capital of the tractable island of Danoy, is only thirty miles from Takar on a different inter-island steamer route, which disconnects with that to Bar by anywhere from a day to a week. On her way to the position to which Miss Destiny, or whoever or whatever you please, had called her, Miss Ellen Moore, arriving at Pading at the break of day on Monday, faced the ordeal of waiting over until Wednesday.

Clancy, who was in these waters with the *Pak-towan*, first saw her across the veranda of the Spanish hostelry that was called a hotel in English for no reason, he said, except the paint on the sign. For dinner they served you fish in grease and peppers and meat in grease and peppers and no fruit. And what do you think was the breakfast on sudsy-hot mornings, when your eyes were starting with the heat from your aching head and your tongue was a hot stone in your mouth? A thimbleful of chocolate as thick as molasses and one small sweet-cake! Probably the proprietor would have turned out something better for Ellen; if he had not, he would have broken

the precedent set by other people she had met on her journey.

“ She’s come out to teach, you say? ” quoth the Lord High Admiral of the hundred-tonner to the Captain of the Port. “ What! To teach! ” as he got a better view of her face. “ And waiting for a steamer, you say? What! Going to Bar! Why, of course she is! Of course she is! She’s going on the U. S. S. *Paktowan*, which sails at nine! ”

If no one had introduced Clancy he would have introduced himself, as he never wanted for words or a way.

“ Don’t you worry about time. We will do it nicely before dark,” he told her. “ I can do five knots with the Pakky right regularly. Once I did eight for a while, till everything began to break at once and she lay a gasping wreck, undone. But with hammer, rivets, a piece of stovepipe, and some putty I can patch any part. That’s the beauty of her. I have target practice, battle practice, quarters, swing compasses, and everything in the book. You’ll not only get there sooner, but you’ll see a great command.”

His one Chinese boy, cook, ammunition-passer, and head devil, had Ellen’s trunk aboard inside of fifteen minutes and in half an hour they were out at sea, she seated in the one chair with a back under that postage-stamp of awning aft, while he sat in Oriental fashion on the deck, talking to her as if he had known her all his life.

“ It’s funny you’re coming out to teach,”

he remarked, ponderingly, "out into this jungly country."

Why should everybody be asking her and her particularly this question? Ellen wondered. She had learned to give a stereotyped answer:

"It's double pay for abc's and no 'math.' I do know my abc's, anyway, and I had to earn a living."

Judging by his own mind, Clancy thought there ought to be a lot of men in the United States who would be slaves of the desk to keep her in a carriage and pair. But he must not allow himself such thoughts. Wasn't he engaged?—as he promptly told everyone in his transparent manner of the sea. She did remind him of Clem, however, and thereon he took her into the stuffy box of a deck-cabin to show her a portrait of a young lady, though he might have shown her the one in his pocketbook. A third he had in his trunk.

"The only unhappy thing for us both," he explained, "is that her name is Clementine. But she can't help that any more than she could having the measles. Her folks call her Clemmy, but I concluded that sounded too much like clammy, so it's Clem!"

"I wouldn't mind what her name is," said Ellen, "she's so good-looking;" as Miss Clementine Underhill was, no doubt, but she had a look, too, which might indicate fickleness to a student of character.

"Everybody says so and I say so most of all! I'm a lucky one! We're going to be married when

this cruise is up. Think of it!" exclaimed that quick Clancy. "We knew each other only three weeks before I sailed. It took us both sudden. She certainly did get me hard, right there!"

He put his hand over his heart and blushed, and then changed the subject by asking Ellen if she wouldn't like to come on the bridge.

"It's a great and rare privilege to go on the bridge of the Pakky," said he. "There's only one of her kind, while we have eight battleships. So you see I'm not boasting."

The truth was that the *Paktowan* had no bridge. You stood by the wheel and looked over the bow and the Colt's. He showed Ellen the working of the Colt's and then drifted back to Clem.

"The mails are something fierce out here," he told her, as they went aft to that one shady spot. "I haven't had a letter from Clem for four weeks and I know she writes every day. Anyhow, I'll have a big bunch when they do come. But here, I've talked more to you than I have to anyone about her! Do you usually draw confidences out of people this way?"

"Yes. Haven't I been quizzing you?" she asked.

He returned her teasing glance with one that comprehended.

"Because you haven't had a chance," he admitted. "I'll be old Mr. Sphinx and you will do all the talking at lunch. Hey! Ah Fong!"

Out of the galley came slippered feet and hands being wiped on apron.

“ Ah Fong, did you bring any flowers for the table? ”

“ Flowlahs? ” quoth the graven image.

“ Yes, flowers. Don't you know that there should always be flowers on the table when I have a lady to tiffin? ”

Of course, Ah Fong knew it now. But he acted as if he had learned it on his grandfather's knee.

“ Yes, Mlasta. Me savey long time! Yes, me catchee flowlahs at Pading. Fall ovahboahd! Velly solly, Missy, velly solly! ”

“ Did you ever know anybody to get ahead of the East! ” exclaimed Clancy.

Ah Fong, however, cut a mango to look like a yellow lily, set it on a teacup bottom for a vase, and, without a smile, said, in monosyllabic monotony: “ Flowlahs! Me catchee! ” when he served the meal.

This was all very good nonsense and there was more of it to come between Clancy and his guest; but in the back of Miss Ellen Moore's head was the awakening sense that with the hills of Bar in sight across that slightly rolling, laundry-blue sea her journey was at an end and surprises and explanations were to come.

What would Big think of her? What could he think of her? It was not possible that he knew of her coming. All the news he had was the letter she had written when she was staying with Miss Tyson. And why was it any of his affair? More than ever was she glad that she had asked for a rural school, where she would be away from the

capital and would not be under any charge of having used his influence. She was really in earnest in this point of view, too, or, at least, thought she was.

“Do you know the Governor?” she asked.

“Oh, the Big Fellow! Well, I should say so! He’s a splendid sort. Only I’m afraid he’s too simple. He’s always saying ‘don’t kill anybody.’ Old Prairie Fire and he don’t jibe. The General’s idea is, when in doubt shoot. If you hit the mark you’re bound to kill an insurrecto, he thinks. But the trouble is that by the time he arrives all the real insurrectoes have gone and he kills a few of the populace, whose relatives then turn insurrecto.”

“Now you mustn’t say anything against Big to me—not a word!” she declared, sharply, her loyalty to him flaring up.

“I wasn’t! ’Tisn’t the navy’s business. I wasn’t! The Pakky does what she’s told, which is mostly to go where the rifles aren’t being landed. No! The Governor’s too good for this kind of a job.”

But why did she call him Big? he asked himself.

It now occurred to her for the first time that the fact of her relations to Big must be known. It was clear that explanations would be inevitable. She began, at once, with Clancy.

“You know, I’m a sort of adopted sister of the Governor’s,” she said. “We lived in the same house until I was twelve—though we aren’t any

blood relation. And we've always been like brother and sister, quite! "

Clancy thought this threw a new and unpleasant light on the Governor's character. There must be something wrong with any man who would allow such a sister as this to come out to Bar to teach school.

" And I'm going to let you into a secret," she continued. She saw that this, too, must be known in order to make her position clear. " I got my position and came all the way without ever telling him a word, as a surprise! "

That was different. The Governor rose to his former place in Clancy's estimation.

" What a lark! "

Talk about girls! Clancy doubled his feet under him and, locking his arms around his knees, rocked in glee. Wasn't he glad he had seen her on the veranda at Pading! Well, if he hadn't met Clem first he—but he was most loyal to Clem.

" You'll have to call on the Governor at once. That's official!" he told her.

" Yes, I suppose so. I'm quite official now, myself."

" Certainly. I'll try to give the Pakky another knot so as to be sure to arrive before sundown."

" I've letters to Major and Mrs. Staton. Do you know them? " she asked.

" Do I? The Major's just all soldier, to my mind. And Mrs. Staton! She is one of those women, so pleasant and simple, that nobody can

help liking her. But *you* ought to know that kind——” and Clancy recalled that he had promised Clem not to flirt.

They were in the lee of the land. The wake of the little gunboat creased greasy ripples in the sea. Her speed made a trifling breeze. The sun was a furnace's round, open door, in a sky of flaming yellow on the western horizon, while the gleam of the sand on the shore under the cocoanut palms, with their unmoving, unreal, glazed, dark plumes, suggested the still heat ashore.

Miss Ellen Moore was nervous. She could not deny that she was, even to herself, over that prospect of actually seeing Big inside of an hour. Clancy had an irresistible desire to be present at the meeting, fully appreciating that it was not a thing to ask. He received the most delightful of thanks for his kindness, but no invitation, and found himself the guardian of a trunk marked “E. M.,” which was to go to the Statons’.

In her American gown of white with step so alert and carriage so free, she made the natives, coming out of their houses for their desultory promenade, turn to look at this new phenomenon from that far-off, incomprehensibly energetic temperate zone. She was unconscious of their stares. Her nervousness had gone. Anticipation was supreme. She was going to see old Big, whose “face was so good to look at,” as she had always said.

This was his island; these were the people he ruled. The large white building at the end of the

plaza, now bathed red with that gorgeous tropical sky's change of mood as the sun sank into the sea, was his home. Somewhere within he received the petitioners, the plotters, and the others who came up the stone steps, and that slim, young fellow, with the bulging forehead and the spectacles, must be Kiddy Witherbee, of whom she had heard but had never met.

"Will you say to the Governor that Miss Moore, a new teacher, has come to pay her respects?" she told Kiddy, in a most businesslike fashion.

"Yes, indeed," said Kiddy, oh, most politely! and when he told the Governor he added: "She's very good-looking," in an unofficial opinion expressing an emotion.

"Is she? That's bully! That fulfils Don Francisco's wish for a charming lady," said the Governor, rejoicing, as he gayly rose.

"Then I'll bring her in?" asked Kiddy, solemnly.

For he had been so impressed by the new teacher that he had asked her to take a seat in his own office. It had not looked right to him that she should stand in a hall for even ten seconds.

"He will see you," Kiddy reported to Ellen. "Won't you leave your parasol?" he asked, hoping to be helpful in some way.

There were few American women in Bar, and the thought that such a one as this Miss Moore was to be a permanent fixture in Takar made him grateful to Providence.

“ They’ve a fine school building for you,” he added, after she had told him she would keep the parasol.

Now, this was a great moment for the Big Fellow. He was about to meet the advance guard of that propaganda in which he placed his faith for the future. She had come on a long journey, this charming lady who was to be the divinity of Exhibit A, and she must have a welcome that would make a good impression. He felt of his string tie to see if the knot was tight up to the collar and he placed the chair for visitors at a better angle to his own. With his gladdest smile, our Governor of Bar took a step forward as the lattice doors swung open to admit the first teacher.

But he did not finish the step, at least not properly, and in place of the smile was a look of blank incredulity. He was a dumbstruck, groping giant, with all his unbidden thoughts focused in a vision. If it had been in the middle of the day he would have thought himself heat-struck. He went pale at first and then color came to his cheeks, as he put his hand to his eyes skeptically and let it fall to the side of the desk, on which he supported himself.

“ Ellen! Ellen! Is it really you? ” he asked.

She was standing just inside the door, the bright twilight through the casement on her face which was perplexed, inquiring, fearful, defiant, smiling in relish of the situation.

“ I think it’s I. Indeed, I am quite sure it is! ” she answered.

He saw that there was no doubt of her reality and then it seemed as if he were shouting aloud his welcome; but his lips did not open.

“Aren't you going to shake hands, Big?” she asked.

For all the advantage was on her side. She had been the cause of the surprise and she could enjoy its dramatic effect. Oh, that French and Irish blood!

Her question brought him to himself. Now he was smiling; he was laughing, with all the light of sunrise in his eyes. Seizing her hands he drew her toward the window, as he drank in his fill of her presence.

“Ellen! Ellen! This is bringing home to Bar! Ellen, why did you come?” he asked.

She had her stereotyped answer ready.

“It's double pay for abc's and no 'math'!”

“And why didn't you tell me?”

“Why didn't I?” She frowned. There was no stereotyped answer to this. “Why, I dealt directly with the Department in Washington. And is it the custom in Bar for the Governor to hold the teachers' hands when they make official calls?” she added.

He had been looking at her in a way that any woman ought to have understood had she been seeking the thing which his eyes spoke. He had the winning impulse not to let her go, but, nevertheless, he did.

“Well, when she was the partner of Mister Ninety in Calculus! A big brother has priv-

ileges," he returned, trying to play the game.

"And I always do offer a chair to visitors."

But she preferred to lean against the desk.

"And didn't the Department inform you?" she asked.

"Yes, one Miss Moore was named," he said.

"And of course you were not thinking of me!" she said. "You were busy with your work."

"I wasn't thinking of you as being in Bar. I was hoping that——"

"Yes. I wrote to Aunt Julia. I said all I could, but I couldn't go home till she——"

"No! Never!" he told her. "You were right."

"And, Big, how is the work? Are you winning?" she asked, with sudden intensity. She thought he looked thinner and she was sure he had lost color.

"It's been a hard pull and pretty lonesome," he said. "But now I begin to see a few rays of light."

"Oh, it's all new to me, all a wonderland! I've so much to learn! But having first paid my official call, as duty bound, on my superior officer, Your Excellency"—here she made a bow—"I must hurry to Mrs. Staton's and pay my respects."

"No. You're staying here to dinner," he answered. "And I'm not an Excellency. That's a Spanish custom I seem unable to overcome."

"But, really, Big, I better——" she began, strangely.

THE BIG FELLOW

“ Why, the Statons are coming here to dinner! ” he rejoined.

“ They are? ”

“ Yes, I know they are! ” he declared, boldly, and sat down to the military telephone.

“ Yes, the new teacher’s here! ” he said at his end. “ Oh, Clancy told you who she was. No getting ahead of Clancy. . . . Oh, never mind if you have roast fowl; so’ve we, and the sauce of conversation. No, I’ll not take no. And tell Clancy to come along, too.”

“ There, didn’t I tell you the Statons were coming to dinner? ” he said, as he hung up the receiver. “ And Mrs. Staton says you’re to make her house your home as long as you please.”

“ But, Big, I applied for one of the rural schools,” she demurred. “ I shall be going into the country right away.”

“ No. Two miles from town and you’re to ride out and in every day.”

“ Oh! ” she exclaimed in a prolonged breath, and looked away from him.

Then she was to be near him all the time! Then it would appear as if she had come to seek him! This presented a new problem. It occurred to her that she had done a terrible thing, outraging all the proprieties of her heart. She must ask to be transferred to the country. In this second of her silence he saw her clear, pure profile in the glow of that swiftly dying twilight, so fresh and so beautiful.

“ Ellen! ” he said quietly, without any response

from her; for she it was now, her imagination busy, who was at a loss for a word.

That winning impulse was in his mind again. A storm of words was knocking for exit. He was afraid of the very strength of his love which was like the strength of his nature when it was in action, bearing down on an object. And gently he had spoken that "Ellen," and he was gentle in the way that a big man, fearing that he will be inconsiderate, may be.

He thought of her side. Evidently she did not want a school near the city, fearing the embarrassment that would come from his love, which, in his ignorance, he believed that she knew. Driven from home, she had not come to Bar on his account or through his influence—or wouldn't she have written him of her plan?—but to earn the double pay with which, in the declaration of freedom from dependence, he feared that she meant to pay off that hateful debt.

But he did have her near him. She had brought a part of home to Bar. She was actually there, livening that bare room where he worked into the room of a real palace, and she would be living only across the plaza at Major Staton's.

"Two Braids!" he exclaimed, in a glad impulse of fellowship and thankfulness. "Two Braids! Partner in secrets!"—at least she would not deny him this.

She looked full at him, smiling.

"Well, Big, partner in secrets?" she returned, gayly.

“ Two Braids, this is the biggest task I’ve had yet. It’s a great work and I must do it! ” he said.

“ And never mind the splinters. You’ll win, Big,” she answered, brightly.

“ And you can help! ”

He slipped his hand over hers which lay on the desk, and through both ran such a thrill of partnership as there ran on the night she bade him Godspeed to his fight for fortune in the city.

“ I can? Honestly I can? ” she cried, all aglow, nostrils quivering and eyes speaking more than words can. Oh, that French and Irish blood!

“ Yes. You’re to be Exhibit A. You are to be the Charming Lady to show the way. You are to convince the Presidentes what a good thing schools are! ”

“ I’ll do my best—my very best—for your great work, Big,” she answered, “ and obey orders like a soldier,” she added, happily.

With the Big Fellow bending forward in his chair while she, leaning on the desk, looked down into his eyes, they talked. Kiddy Witherbee, starting to come through the door, saw them and withdrew, without really telling even himself what he had seen. Truly, he was the most discreet of secretaries.

The two were still talking when the Statons and Clancy arrived, and triumphantly the Big Fellow introduced Ellen with all his gift of carrying any company with him.

“ This is the Miss Two Braids that we brought

up in our old house at home," he said. " This is the new teacher of Exhibit A."

Thus the situation was clarified. Thus a new bargain, without any formal admission, had been struck in the consciousness of both. It contemplated no knowledge on her part of his true feelings toward her, he thought. She saw herself freed from suspicion on his part that she had come for any reason except abc's for double pay. Natural, easy, pleasant working relations were established.

XXXI

CLOTHING THE NAKED WITH ABC'S

WAS there ever before such a man as William Winterburn Worth, of the Society of the Word? Take a vote of all the Americans in Bar and you would have had a unanimous, Never! Since his arrival a week after the first landing party he had not been off the job a single day, in the words of Sergeant Smith, of Company B, of the Sixty-Fifth, who ought to know. William Winterburn Worth looked as if he would roll up in the heat like a leaf on a griddle (to quote the same authority), but the sun must have found nothing on his bones to melt and leniently passed him by as not worth while.

In the early days of the fighting before the guerrilla horrors, while there was still an enemy in being that you might locate, you saw him going from camp to camp with slung bag and pockets full of tracts, saying, as he passed out his leaflets:

“Boys, while you are fighting for your country, here is a little food for your soul.”

At first the tired soldiers wished he would make it a piece of pie or a package of tobacco and laughed about him. But a brave man is a brave man, whether there is a bottle or a hymnbook in

the back pocket of his khaki breeches; and when they saw the little missionary holding fast to his tracts under fire, keeping up cheerfully on the march, and helping the wounded, they initiated him into full membership of the confraternity of fighting blood.

“ William Winterburn Worth is my name,” he would say, “ but they call me W. W. for short.”

W. W. he became in barracks and on trail. The troops began to read his leaflets just to please him. “ That was a pretty long one, that last,” a soldier would say; or, “ Don’t put in any more milk and honey references. It makes us homesick for apple, mince, and brown the wheats;” or, “ That one about the sword of Gideon was to the point, W. W.”

“ Yes, I thought that would be appropriate. Boys, I do do you some good, don’t I? ” he sometimes asked, wistfully.

“ You do us all a hellofalot of a good,” said Sergeant Smith, of Company B, earnestly.

By which William Winterburn Worth knew that the adjectival language with which soldiers keep dragging legs on the move when they carry a Krag and a hundred and fifty rounds had no sin in it; and by which he knew, also, to his satisfaction, that the benefit referred to was spiritual and had nothing to do with the Syndicate.

Whether that Pie Syndicate was born in the head of Mrs. Staton or W. W., who would give all the credit to her, this history cannot say. Circumstances point rather to W. W. as having de-

veloped it from his experience in observing the inedibility of tracts. Mrs. Staton, however, did give the lessons in the art of making to the putative Tongalese cooks, whose first results bore packing better than hard tack. But it is on the records of a thousand palates that they improved with time. Far into the interior traveled these discs which gave heart and sustenance and content to American manhood and pinned to every one, you may be sure, was a leaflet of the Society of the Word.

Naturally, W. W. enthused over the school campaign, for it held out the prospect of the Tongals reading the Word in English. He was fond of parables and similes, and he went among the parents of Bowang, saying: "Your children will come to us naked and we will clothe them with learning;" and he was the first to call socially, without his bag of tracts, though with a few in his pocket for First Aid in case of an emergency, on Miss Ellen Moore, who was taken into the heart of the Staton family in short order. The Major was almost talkative on her account, being known to have committed himself, without any apparent injury to his throat, of a dozen relative clauses during dinner at the Palace.

"It is beautiful! It is beautiful!" said Don Francisco, after his first interview with the new schoolmistress; which is what W. W. said, and Mrs. Staton wondered whether they referred to the idea of primary education or to the person of Miss Ellen Moore. Both were beautiful, and we

will leave it at that. Besides, the second disciple whispered in the Governor's ear:

“It was a good risk we took, Excellency.”

At a luncheon on the day after her arrival at the Major's, with the Governor, W. W., Father Tim and others present, all being for the moment educational experts, they spoke of nothing much except that school. The assistant overseer had everything ready, but he would not tell Ellen many details.

“Excellency,” he said to the Governor, “I would let our first teacher see with her own eyes, as a surprise” (which it was, no one can deny). “I have chosen only the little children, none over eight, for the primary. That is better. It will win their parents. It will be more—beautiful.”

Don Francisco was a pretty good politician, as we know, and he knew that native mind. So by common consent all the details were left to him.

“Does the lady approve of the little ones only?” he asked, with his best bow. “She will not think it too simple for one of the high education from America?”

“Oh, the little ones, by all means!” said Ellen. “I do not want to teach grown folks abc's, and I'm fairly wild to see them and begin. I'm glad it's to-morrow.”

It had been Don Francisco's plan to precede the party the next morning to make sure that all was right. How he wished, later on, that he had! A little persuasion from the others who wanted his

company, and he sent word to one of the leading fathers, on whom he could depend, that all the pupils were to be in their seats inside the schoolhouse at nine.

Ensign Clancy took the party on the *Paktowan*, as by the river, he said, the trip could be made quicker than by land, and principally, because it pleased him to have an excuse to play the host. The Governor, Major and Mrs. Staton, W. W., and Father Tim would not have missed the occasion for any bribe; but the General and Mrs. Strong were suffering from the heat. By Strings Nos. 3 and 4 old Prairie Fire would not be party to any programme of teaching a lot of brown brats how to kill American soldiers. To him, the abc's were loaded with dynamite.

Don Francisco was standing beside Ellen watching her as they rounded the bend. What would she say after the higher education in the noble edifices at home to his poor effort to please? She promptly called for a cheer at sight of the poor effort. Don Francisco had cleared a bluff on the river bank. From a pole floated the flag which looks well over any schoolhouse. This schoolhouse, however, was not a little red one. It was a creation of bamboo, with a thatch of nipa palms, on stilts for the rainy season, and a bamboo ladder leading up to the door.

Everything seemed to be as planned. The parents were gathered around the house in unblinking, grave curiosity, and evidently the pupils were all inside. With the Presidente and Ellen leading

—for were not the honors theirs? as the Governor said—the party left the *Paktowan*. Ellen could not wait on formality.

“ Oh, I’d like to see them first quite alone! ” she said, running ahead. “ You follow. The teacher leads.”

“ A fine woman! A fine woman! ” said Father Tim. “ Now, if the others that are coming are like her, we’ll simply charm these islands into peace.”

As she went up the bamboo ladder, William Winterburn Worth, who could be poetic on occasion, was thinking that her light steps were steps in history. Ellen entered and saw rows of popping eyes, showing their whites at the apparition, and rows of brown faces, and the next the others knew she was precipitately coming down the ladder with her hands held up to her blushing face.

“ I—I didn’t know they were—were like that! ” she gasped.

“ What is it? ” the official party all asked at once.

Ellen only turned her head away from them, with her lips screwed together and twitching, too full of emotion to answer.

All the men sprang to the rescue. It was the Governor, well in the lead, who entered first. He simply could not help breaking into laughter, while Father Tim sniffed through his nose and his blue eyes radiated the inexpressible as he looked at those rows of brown children *in puris natu-*

ralibus, keeping their places quite as bidden and possibly thinking that the Governor's laugh was a part of the educational programme.

Poor W. W.! He stuttered and turned red and turned green. Hadn't he said that "they should come in their nakedness and be clothed with learning?" He was to blame—all to blame, he thought; but we are not so sure that he was. As Father Tim said, there might have been a few shirts if it had not been for W. W.'s miscarried good intentions; though, generally speaking, it was in keeping with the rural custom for children of that age.

Don Francisco, a man of action and decision, grasped the situation at once. His first duty was to prevent a still greater calamity. School must not be dismissed until the *Paktowan* was back around the bend. He told the lot of popping black retinas in the white balls that they were to wait till he gave the word, and they said, "Yes, Señor," all in chorus, like so many automatic dolls. Back in the yard the Big Fellow could not resist laughing again. He was ashamed of himself and he was a most undignified Governor, he knew. Don Francisco's stolid chagrin only added to the humor of the situation.

"The little innocents!" said Father Tim. "They were so unconscious of it!" Inadvertently he caught Mrs. Staton's eye and Mrs. Staton promptly dropped her parasol in front of her face.

"Stop!" she said, thickly.

“ Stop! ” cried poor W. W., tragically, on general principles.

Ellen, having recovered herself, demurred at the suggestion that they should return to Takar and wait until another day. Why shouldn't the class go out the back door to their homes and return with only their minds naked?

This plan Don Francisco soberly saw carried out, while the party waited under the shade of a mango tree. Then all went up the ladder, Don Francisco leading, and on a word from him all the youngsters bobbed up and said in chorus, as they had been taught, “ Greeting, Señorita! We will strive to learn! *Viva!* ” and then bobbed down again, all those popping eyes out of expressionless faces regarding the Charming Lady in Oriental curiosity, while all the native women outside were wondering how she made her gown fit so well.

“ Now, let's have a lesson,” said the Governor to Ellen. “ You're on trial! ”

“ I expected that from *you!* ” she answered, in lively defiance.

She picked up an ant off the floor—the nearest one—and held it up for all to see. They knew what it was. They knew it by millions, and they shouted its Tongal name.

“ A-N-T! ” she said in English; and turning to the blackboard she wrote A-N-T, and began spelling it to them and having them repeat it after her.

“ You'll have to wait and stand, too, till they

have learned it, Excellency," she interjected, in the midst of the lesson.

"You win!" he answered. "All right."

He waited and all did learn it; and thus the abc campaign was begun in the island.

XXXII

MISS TWO BRAIDS REDIVIVUS

SO Ellen became known as the Charming Lady to the natives of Takar. Every morning she rode out to Bowang, the plantain leaves, which she pushed to one side along the trail, spattering her skirt with dew, and the people, whose children were in her school, greeting her with their "Good-morning, Charming Lady!"

But she rarely went or returned alone. Major and Mrs. Staton often came to meet her, and Sergeant Smith, of Company B, riding at her side, in expressing his view of the good she was doing those brown boys and girls, took great care to make it simply "a lot." Once, however, he did slip:

"Father Tim says they are only adjectival accelerators," he stammered, in explanation, "and they don't count against you in the high place."

"I can understand how they may help on the march," Ellen said, brightly.

"They do, a—a lot!" he declared, honestly believing that they did.

"I've seen times when I'd like to use one, myself," she returned. "I've thought them even if I didn't speak them."

“ My goodness! ” he exclaimed.

If it were not Smith it was someone else who had the honor of being her escort. Once Parkowitz offered himself, and the story of the way, with a glance and a few words, in which she put him in his place pleased the garrison. Clancy, when he had a few hours between the fruitless trips on which he was being sent by General Prairie Fire, would run the *Paktowan* against the bank at the foot of the flagstaff of the school-grounds and maybe bring the Charming Lady home by water. He was getting so few letters from Clem now that he found a genuine solace for his disquietude about her in watching Ellen at the abc's.

And the Governor was often her companion on that morning ride, when he was not away in the provinces trying to make more “ nucleuses,” as Don Francisco called them. That working arrangement formed on the day of her arrival was playing its part well. She was Two Braids again and he was the Big of old, holding council and sharing secrets. He saw her enjoying her work and bringing cheer to everyone.

“ I am really helping? ” she asked him many times.

“ More than you can guess, Two Braids. Your coming was a Godsend to me,” he said. “ Your school is the keystone of all my plans for the future.”

This abc idea was the hardest thing Cortina had to combat. Parental human nature did seem

something the same in Bar as elsewhere, as the Big Fellow, out of his knowledge of the humanities and the thousand books, had maintained. Fathers and mothers were glad to have their children learn. Don Francisco came frequently with his parties of inspection to see Exhibit A. Old head men of villages from up country would gravely watch the Charming Lady at her work and depart convinced that popular education was a beautiful idea.

The Thinker, however, was not idle. Plotting so easily under Prairie Fire's nose, through his underground route he sent out his answer to the abc's. The Americans, having failed at fighting, had found a new and cunning trick. They would win the parents through the children, and when this was done, that would be the end of schools and the beginning of slavery. Thus he aroused enmity enough to warrant the guerrillas in burning some of the new schoolhouses that Don Francisco was building.

"But there is another way," thought Cortina. If he could only capture the Charming Lady herself, then the people would see how little there was in this abc magic. Yes, capture her within two miles of the capital.

At first, by Major Staton's order, a squad of soldiers had always been stationed at the school. By the General's order and without the Governor's knowledge they were withdrawn, though no one thought it possible that any party of insurgents would approach the outskirts of the town,

and none did. The score or more came as individuals to a given point in the brush, and, just as Ellen was beginning her morning lesson, with their boloes in hand they ran across the school-ground and up the ladder in barefooted stealth. She turned from the blackboard to see them.

“Señorita, you will come with us,” said the leader.

Instinctively she looked around for some weapon. The nearest approach to one was the frail blackboard pointer, which was useless, of course.

“You will go and go instantly!” she commanded. “Yes, you will go instantly or you will not have time to escape our soldiers! They are here in hiding. I have only to scream to warn them.”

“No, señorita, none is nearer than town,” said the little leader, grinning at her subterfuge.

A few of the older children had gathered around her in a hopeless kind of loyalty. The others fled out of the back door, and she knew they would carry the news. She had no sense of fear yet. Relief would come, she thought, and her first object should be to gain time.

“Tongals are always polite,” she remarked, and wondered that her voice sounded so natural. “You will let me put on my hat before we start.”

She was very leisurely about this, even trying to laugh over a pretended mistake in having stuck a pin into something more solid than hair.

“Come! We cannot wait on tricks!” and the

little man with the bolo put his hand on her arm. She shook it off, and saw that the others were pressing closer. Anything but that they should touch her, was her thought. And still she was confident that help would come as she went down the ladder with her captors. No one was in sight in the grounds, and, with half of the band in single file ahead of her and half behind, they took up the trail along the river bank.

When they told her that she was walking too slowly she took a few steps more rapidly, and later with her dignity and command of self kept the leader at his distance when he threatened to use force. It struck her as ridiculous, as well as tragic and inconceivable, that she should be led through the jungle by these miserable little ruffians.

When the trail broke into a clearing her quick ear was the first to hear the engines of the *Paktowan*, which was coming around the bend. Clancy caught sight of her white gown at the same moment. He could not fire without endangering her, as she realized instantly. Her swift glance for cover was rewarded.

“Fire!” she cried, at the top of her voice, as she dropped into the crotch of the shelving roots of a big tree and snuggled there.

Clancy at the Colt’s lost not a second. Swish came the stream of bullets. They were so close to her, and yet she was as safe as if behind armor! For an instant she closed her eyes. When she opened them that little leader of the band was

lying dead so near her that she could reach his revolver. Without any squeamishness she took it from his holster and then looked around defiantly, feeling really safe for the first time. In this position Clancy found her when he and his crew, all with rifles, including Ah Fong, the Chinese cook, came dashing up the bank in pursuit of any members of the band that the Colt's had not cared for.

"What luck!" said Clancy. "I must have reached the school not less than five minutes after you went and I guessed they'd take this trail."

"Oh, Clancy!" She was weak and faint, now, as he assisted her to rise.

"What a girl you are! What savey for you to cry Fire! and jump behind that tree, which gave me just the chance I wanted!" he said; and he was going to let her lean on his shoulder as they went down the hill to the *Paktowan*. But she was quite herself again and disdained any aid, as she chattered nervously.

"I must tell Sergeant Smith," said Ellen, "that I wanted to use a lot of adjectival accelerators, myself, when that miserable little ruffian—ugh! I had no idea that bullets could sound so sweet. Oh, the Pakky looked bigger and finer to me than any battleship!"

"A battleship wouldn't have been much use for this job, would she?" said he, proudly. "The Pakky is a great command!"

"And you're her Lord High Admiral and always on the spot!"

“ With perfect coöperation from the land forces on this occasion, Charming Lady! My! What a girl you are! ” he declared, in his transparent manner of the sea.

By the time they returned to the school, Company B came tearing along the trail, with murder and hate in its eyes, the Governor and Staton leading. Ellen was embarrassed by all the attention showered on her, while the Governor in tears shook Clancy and patted him and thanked him.

“ You’ll have the largest escort home you ever had, ” said the Major to Ellen.

“ But I’m not going! The idea! ” she flared. “ I’m mad clear through! Please summon the children back. I’ll finish the morning lesson! ”

What about your French and Irish blood, now, Aunt Julia? And you folks out Plymouth Rock way, as you sit before your Thanksgiving turkey and think of the brave old days when the Indian arrow through the window nailed the textbook to the school-mistress’s table, pray don’t overeat in your fears that the old spirit is dying out!

But Ellen would not hear to Big writing home the story of the affair, which she never liked to have anybody mention. Besides, all danger was over. Even the General did not object to a guard at Bowang thereafter. If that were not enough, Benito rigged up a punka at the school and through the session, which was held in the morning, he would sit outside the door, steadily pulling and perfectly ready to hit the head of a snake.

XXXIII

ELLEN WRITES TO THE PERSONALITY

MY! What a girl! Clancy would keep saying this to himself on his sea-marches. He was sure that Clem would never have had the sense to take cover and cry "Fire!" in the way that Ellen had. My! What a girl! The Lord High Admiral in wondering admiration sought her company when he was in port, which often brought him to the Governor's veranda, where, in the cool of the evening, so delicious after the heat of the day, you would find at one time or another Ellen and the Statons; Thompson, the young engineer; Horswell, the young Australian, assistant to Parkowitz; Father Tim, and W. W. and officers of the garrison.

By their very handicaps this little band of friends was held together. All hoped against odds, including Thompson, who had a good coal prospect. "Only I need a company of soldiers hard-by to work it in comfort," he said, for it was off the beaten trails.

"Patience!" the Governor would say to him. "We are all young."

Horswell was plodding along, enduring Parko-

witz's patronage. At the mention of Parkowitz's name he would change the subject. He could not speak loyally of his superior and would not speak disloyally.

The silent Major was in much the same position as Horswell. He would not allow a word to be said against the General in his presence. When pressed, he admitted that the military situation was no better and feared it might grow worse.

"I'm confident that more rifles are getting in," he said, "and a more cunning mind than Campo's is behind the insurrecto movements."

No week passed without some record of casualties. Prairie Fire's insistent call for more troops only strengthened the conviction of the military extremists in Washington that this young civil governor was embarrassing the commander of the forces. In the garrison towns, where the schools were to be located, a friendlier feeling had developed, but it could not spread, perhaps not even last, while the underground route was continually sending out its insidious promptings.

"Yes, the Americans are very sincere in their moral ideas, very. They teach the abc's and love of religion and retain in his office a bishop who has a harem!"

This sneer met Don Francisco's school propaganda at every turn. Father Tim cried out against it in shame. The Bishop, sitting under his punka in white canonicals, was a serene old

Pasha, mindless of any criticism, while Cortina plotted and Prairie Fire blundered.

Ellen with her intuitive gift for understanding and hearing all sides, saw the Governor held at bay by incompetence over which he had no control. She saw him going and coming to the provinces, with sleepless nights on the trail, expending his store of energy in that sapping climate without stint while, to use her own words, she was filling up with wrath. She knew that she was going to lose her temper with Big if things did not change. One evening when she and the Statons had been to the Palace to dinner, and she and Big were pacing up and down together on the veranda, the explosion came just after he had told her what he thought was good news.

“I believe we will get the power to organize under my authority a couple of companies of native constabulary,” he said. “This will show the people that they are to have a share in their own police work. Who would you say, Charming Lady and expert in the workings of the native mind, would make the best commander?”

“Sergeant Smith,” she answered, promptly. “He understands the Tongals. They have great respect for him.”

“So everybody says,” he responded. “I think that I know one good soldier who will have a rise in the world.”

Ellen was delighted that he should, but the idea of the constabulary was the match to the fuel that had been accumulating in her mind.

“ What is the good of this or the abc’s as long as that horrible old Bishop stays? Why don’t you tell him to go? ”

“ I haven’t any right, Two Braids. But I have made every possible hint; and Father Tim, in his blandest way, has suggested to him that he has earned a vacation in Spain; but all to no purpose.”

“ Don’t you know that this hateful Cortina is against us? ” she went on, bound to thrash the matter out.

“ I assume that he is. But Cortina speaks in a most friendly way.”

“ Yes, if he does that it is enough for you, you big simple! You think everybody is honest because you are! I’d have Cortina up and say, ‘ Four hours to pack! You’re off this afternoon, little scorpion! ’ ”

“ Exile? Oh, no, no! That would never do! It is quite out of keeping with my programme. And you must remember that the opposition at home would make a hero of him.”

“ Hero! The people at home must be mad! ”

“ You see, if I took any action against Cortina without evidence, why, I would stultify the very sense of the law I am trying to impress on this people.”

“ Evidence! Fiddlesticks! Sometimes I’d like to box your ears! ” she said, getting angrier, while he looked as if he wouldn’t mind having his ears boxed by her. “ You are the big, simple one, as the natives say! Don’t you know that boy

Enrico tells all the General's plans? That pudgy, profane old thing! He ought to be called ' Fire Alarm ' instead of ' Prairie Fire ' ! ”

The Governor could not resist the truth of the designation or its humor and laughed contemptively.

“ Yes, it doesn't seem to me that Enrico ought to be made a military confidant. I have written and spoken to the General about it, and he was so angry that it only made him stubborn and matters worse. He said that I better study medicine and get a brigadiership. You see, he had me rather at fault. It wasn't in my department. ”

“ Department! Department! Bosh! Red tape! Superannuated fossilism! Don't you know that things are growing worse and worse, while you sit here and play the noble idealist! More rifles! More insurgents! And your career, Big! Think if you should be beaten—if there were defeats and the army stepped in with another military governor—and that is what old Prairie Fire wants! ”

The Big Fellow grew sober. It was not that he was thinking of his career: He was thinking of the success of his work.

“ Why don't you tell the President and everybody? Oh, if Willy Sweetser were only here and could write that old thing up as he is! ”

Yes, if Willy were there! How long could General Prairie Fire, in his adipose incompetency, last under public scrutiny? But this was ten thousand miles from home.

“ I have come pretty near losing my temper with the General two or three times,” mused the Big Fellow.

“ Oh, do lose it! ” she pleaded. “ Thunder at him! Thrash him! Oh, I’d love to see you on the rampage and knock them all down—the whole lot! ” being quite irresponsible for what she was saying.

“ You see, Two Braids, there was a good deal of opposition in the Department to any civil governor and I came on trial, as it were.”

“ Yes, you are between the kill-alls,” she answered, “ and the allies of Cortina in our own country.”

“ Time! Time! Evidence collects,” he said, thoughtfully. “ My reports are going in regularly.”

“ Reports by mail ten thousand miles away—good Heavens! You’re worse than the god Buddha sitting a thousand years by the river bank with folded hands! ”

“ Some by cable,” he added, by way of extenuation, on the defensive before increased fire. “ The cable is always open.”

“ Cable! Who’ll read it? But what’s the use! I’m done! You’re a great, simple fool, Big! A fool! ”

Having done her little best, having spoken her mind to the full, without waiting for an answer she sped off the veranda.

“ Not a fool! ” he called after her, in boyish injury.

He felt sheepish and really a good deal like what she had called him, he had to admit. With more than admiration in his eye he followed her rapid progress across the square to the Statons', and he was overcome with a sense of isolation and almost of discouragement. He thought that he knew a few people who really deserved knocking down.

She kept on calling him a fool under her breath until she began to think of some way to help him. What could she, one of the many teachers in one of the Islands, do to make the truth known in that far-away Washington, where the truth, traveling by many typewritten processes, is sometimes lost in the abundance of words that no one has time to read?

Yes, there was a way. Of late a new personality had risen into high official being. Evasive and manifest, dominant of will, insistent of questioning, irrepressible of spontaneity of purpose, the tremors of its vitality, making the typewriters all along the line jump, had spread as far as Bar. Someone was always wanting to know why. Someone was not afraid to think for himself. Someone was not afraid to act. At the Major's, Ellen went immediately to her room and to her writing-table. With the spur of her idea, without thought of form, she indicted the most unofficial letter that ever went out of Bar from government employee to government superior.

“ If this is not the right way to begin a letter to you,” she wrote to the Personality, “ then I am beginning the best way I know how. It is from one who is so full of things you ought to know that she can’t keep quiet. I am the first teacher in the Island, and many others are coming later. My school is Exhibit A, the pioneer, and I’m proud of it.

“ The little ones are getting on finely. If you could only see them at recitation, and when they all sing school songs together like so many little brown manikins, showing the white of their teeth and the whites of their eyes, I know you’d enjoy it.” (You may be sure, Ellen, the Personality would.) “ I have some of the best ones already so they can spell ‘ mango ’ and even that whopper ‘ banana,’ although some of the backward ones cannot do ‘ palm ’ yet—but what is the use?

“ I know I am prejudiced. I can’t help it. Anybody would be. I am an informer, I know, but I’ll face General Prairie Fire before anybody and prove it all, too—yes, every bit of it! Once he chased some Indians out West. Some honest people of influence who knew him then think he is still the same man. He puffs with every step from the heat. All his plans he tells to everybody, and when they go wrong he takes it out of the soldiers and the natives. He doesn’t know this isn’t Arizona—it’s jungle.

“ Now, Major Staton did not tell me this—not

a word of it! I saw it for myself. He is the Chief of Staff and he stays on and is sworn at for duty's sake, all in silence. But he sits up nights with his maps and books. If there is a change in a gun mechanism or any improvement of any kind he knows it. This has nothing to do with fighting Tongals, he says, but it's his profession. He works and rides and walks. He is hard-muscled and clear-headed. Isn't that the way a soldier ought to be? He shouldn't be pudgy and growling and swearing, should he?

“Why send teachers if you are going to keep old Prairie Fire? All the little ones need, then, is to know first aid to the wounded, and all our soldiers need is legs. Why send a Governor to teach the people that the Americans are the people's friends; to establish schools and town governments and peace and order, when everything that he does old Prairie Fire spoils? He is a *big man*, the Governor. Oh, you don't know *what a big man he is!* He is the law and the light. But he is so high-minded, so considerate, so broad, that he cannot realize all the meanness this island breeds. He is trying to work it out without troubling Washington—when it *can't be worked out!* There will be something terrible in this island if General Prairie Fire stays. The Governor says the military is not in *his* department. But it is in *yours*. I can tell you and I do—the truth—the whole truth.

“Most respectfully yours,

“ELLEN MOORE.”

She mailed the letter at once. When her head was on the pillow between the two braids a little reaction came.

“ My goodness! I don’t really remember what I said! It must have been fearfully impertinent and dreadfully worded! ” she thought. “ But I don’t care! I was mad clear through. It is the truth. I wish I could cable—I wish I could just talk to him for a few minutes! ”

XXXIV

WHY THE BISHOP WENT

THE first party of teachers for Bar was on its way. Ellen felt her responsibility as a pioneer in the abc's who was to come up for examination before a superintendent from home and other censorious professional eyes. Don Francisco, paternal, busy, gravely enthusiastic, who had traveled far in sun and rain spreading the new propaganda in face of the difficulties that we already know, would make the most of a great event.

“With your permission, Excellency,” he said, “we will have a *fiesta* in the plaza. There will be an address by you, recitations and singing by the pupils of Exhibit A, a prayer by Father Maloney and William Winterburn Worth, and food and dancing and gayety generally. Our people like the *fiestas*. They will come from afar for the day, though they plan to fight us at night. But the *fiesta* is the good politics. Some will be convinced, and everyone convinced is what you call a nucleus; is it not?”

The Governor concurred, while General Prairie Fire said if there was to be any damned-fool business of this kind he would have

to bring in troops from the outlying districts to prevent a massacre, whose horrors he pictured with String No. 1. The army was being made a side show, he told Enrico, with String No. 3, and that military expert agreed with him.

A thing of more import was that Father Tim might not make the prayer, which W. W. took even more to heart than the chaplain himself. The Bishop as soon as he heard of the plan had put on his spotless canonicals and proceeded to the Palace, where he signified his approval of the function and that he would grace the occasion with his presence, as kings say, and this with his heavy face set and his inverted eyes looking at the corner of the desk.

How he came by those eyes is a story of common report, whose authenticity has not yet been the subject of antiquarian inquiry in Spain. It was said that his grandfather, a famous bull-fighter, had been caught by the tip of a bull's horn between the eyes, making a wound that became a birthmark in future generations. Of the partial truth of this, so far as one generation was concerned, there was proof enough to be seen in the streets of Takar, where certain natives, of ages from five to twenty-five, with inverted eyes, had a name among the people that was unpleasant enough in suggestion without repetition here.

"How many do you suppose there are?" Father Tim once asked Sergeant Smith, with whom he was great friends.

"Don't get me a-guessing," said he. "When

the census sharps come out from Washington they ought to put them in a special class."

Don Francisco, when he heard of the Bishop's intention, feared a demonstration. He wished that he had not undertaken a *fiesta*, after all. For the first time the Governor saw him in a passionate temper.

"Should a bishop have so many children?" the old Presidente asked. "Not of our church, no! What does it say to all the people when the Father Maloney he is not to welcome the school children and the Bishop is? Order the polygamist to stay away, Excellency."

But the Bishop of the diocese could not be refused a place on the speakers' platform. He was the head of an organization.

"I begin to think the law is a fool!" Don Francisco declared. "The law is not the good politics. I fear there will be trouble. Our abc's will be proved the lie." He departed still loyal, but in a new mood.

As for Father Tim, he had been saying in regret and chagrin for months, "If Mother Rome only knew it!" Letters he had written through such channels as he could, and gradually they were finding their way to higher places. Only a parish priest before he became chaplain, he had the temerity to go to the Bishop and try to explain; but the Bishop seemed to think that that prayer was his golden opportunity for official vindication.

Father Tim was pretty blue until he met Ser-

geant Smith, of Company B, in the street, when, suddenly, his eyes began to twinkle.

“Ye divil, ye!” said he, lapsing back into the brogue—may he never lose it!

He whispered to Smith and Smith whispered to him, this Brutus and Cassius of a conspiracy in which Brutus needed little encouragement, although in saying so one makes a guess; for officialdom was not in favor of publishing the details of an affair which a layman thinks too good to remain a secret of tropical administration.

“If there’s anybody asks any questions refer him to me, Father,” said that lean soldier, who seemed to regard it as a privilege to be the goat from the energetic and discreet manner in which he set to his task. While the stands were being built in the plaza he went out into the jungle twice a day, where he was “doing a little abc militia work,” as he called it gleefully, on his own account.

“How many have you altogether?” asked Father Tim.

“Twenty strong cases,” said he. “I don’t know as they’re all the straight goods, but they say so and they’ve got the look, and any that ain’t will make up for a number I’m sure to have missed.”

“It’s a shameful thing to do, but I’m human, Tommy Smith, I’m human, and I’ve had to carry this thing with the natives long enough,” the chaplain explained, in justification. “And how do they drill?” he asked.

“Bully! They’re the real original gugu battalion, all right. Yes, sir, they’re putting their hearts into their work.”

“Sure, they ought to. It’s a family matter.” And the Father was ashamed of himself for this remark, too. At times he wondered if he were not unpriestly. Was not this tropical life demoralizing him?

Of all that world of Takar, he and the Sergeant had the most anticipatory interest in the *fiesta*. At dawn of the great morning the people, in their best starched shirts and with their hair oiled, began to stream in from the trails. Some had walked half the night. After the months of fighting and of suffering they were to have a day of pleasure. They were to see the fair-haired giant Governor, who was beaming happy “How do you do’s” as he shook hands and tried in the second that he looked into each face to win the trust and confidence of its owner. He was like some genial, generous young father of a mighty family.

Two native bands and a large crowd were at the landing-place at the appointed hour. Especially interested was the group of up-country Presidentes, each of whom was to be sponsor for one of the newcomers in a garrison town. They betrayed their surprise at sight of the teachers, some of whom were middle-aged, while some who were young were not good-looking, some wore spectacles and some were mere commonplace males.

“We thought everyone was just like the

Charming Lady," insisted those disappointed Presidentes.

But that rare old politician, Don Francisco, was equal to the occasion. He promoted Ellen at once.

"The Charming Lady is one of the divinities of the abc's," said he. "There are only a few, and we are lucky to have one on our island. And all the others have her spirit and wisdom."

Then, with the bands playing, they marched to the Palace. The chattering crowds in the plaza were like a numberless opera stage chorus playing the revels of the country folk. Ellen's school was in an honored position among the reserved places inside the Palace green. She was a little embarrassed by the distinction, but determined to do her duty when she saw it, according to the teachings of her youth from Aunt Julia. Another vacant space nearby was not occupied until the Governor and the Bishop and General Prairie Fire, looking fierce, and officialdom generally were taking their seats.

At this dramatic moment came that lean, bronzed Sergeant Smith, of Company B, with his infantryman's stride and veteran swing of the shoulders, solemn as a King's Grenadier, at the head of his marching battalion, all in step and carrying flags. He tried his best to catch the chaplain's eye and failed. Father Tim was studying the architecture of the cathedral spire intently and the Governor's smile was beatific, but scarcely an offset for the angry glances of the

crowd of brown faces in the field of white clothes toward the Bishop. Major Staton, apprehensive of trouble, was watching the troops, who had their instructions.

If Sergeant Smith were to be the goat he proposed, in all soldierly spirit, to bear a full pack to the woods. No doubt he did carry the matter too far, clear beyond the intentions of Father Tim, and in defense he was to answer that he "delivered the goods."

It was his own idea having the flags and putting his recruits in red shirts. In fact, he owned up to everything, including the unpardonable doggerel. When the Bishop rose to make his prayer, the battalion also rose. Thus they could not fail to attract his attention. Who knows but Sergeant Smith may have had in him the making of a stage manager? The Bishop looked at that battalion and started back a step, staring with mouth open, and the battalion began to sing something about the red, white, and blue, school fashion, and "Our filial love for you," putting their heart into their work. For a minute the Bishop's inverted eyes gazed into twenty pairs of a kindred character, then he picked up his skirts and fled up the Palace steps and out the back way.

Father Maloney rose and, when he stepped forward, a cheer came from the crowd, which afterward reverently crossed themselves. No man could ask a higher testimonial for his work than this, as W. W. said. What Sergeant Smith could not understand was how the chaplain could keep

his face straight for that prayer. In pleasant banter Father Tim said by closing his eyes and clasping his hands tight; and then he added, very seriously: "It was easy after that cheer and when I realized what it meant." As for the Bishop, he took the first steamer for Spain.

XXXV

NEWS FROM TOLL

THE *fiesta* was a success, and its most successful feature was the flag drill and singing of the Charming Lady's school, commonplace enough for us at home, but to Bar as important as a Patti's first appearance to America. All who were present had a happy time, including Dr. Cortina. The Governor made more than one new friend, or nucleus, as Don Francisco was fond of calling any convert.

But even he, with his knowledge of the native mind, was a little disappointed with the result of the Bishop's departure. That underground route of insurrection was ready with its prompt explanation. The Bishop had not been sent away: He had gone only as the result of a soldier's joke after the Governor had invited him to make the prayer. So it was plain as a ripening mango on a tree that the government sympathized with his private morals.

All other events presently lose significance, however, in General Prairie Fire's rage over the latest defiance of his military rights. Two companies of native constabulary were being organized under the island government, which

meant the Governor. Now the end was clear! It was massacre; yes, by all the strings in a volley, massacre! Not content with inciting insurrection by abc's and glad-hand politics, we were to train up soldiers to murder us in our beds!

"You don't approve of this, Enrico?" said the General to the faithful one. "Do you think these niggers won't turn the rifles—army rifles, by G—!—against us?"

"No, General," was the answer by the book. "It makes me so sad. They will all say they are so loyal and some day they will rise against us in the dark, yes."

"There you have it! There you have it! And you know the native mind, too, Enrico!"

"It is not for me to say," returned Enrico, ever so modestly, "but I do wish His Excellency were not so simple."

"Simple! He's a cheap politician. We've got lots of 'em in the States."

At this point the General had an idea. He sent for Major Staton, whom he was always suspecting of personal disloyalty. When the Chief of Staff came an eagle eye was fixed on him.

"Major, did you have anything to do with this constabulary business?" he stormed (with which of the strings is not worth mentioning, as he was using Nos. 1, 2, and 3 without discrimination in the heat of conflict this morning).

"No, General."

"Well, if you did I'd have you up before a court! And let me tell you I see things. You

are spending too much time on the Governor's porch. It's bad for discipline and I want it stopped! You keep away from the Governor's!"

The Major was ready to bear a good deal because he thought it was his duty to remain in Bar. Now he begged to inform the General, not for the first time, that his transfer back to his regiment was the General's privilege. This suggestion cooled Prairie Fire. His dependence on the Major was one of the things the General did realize.

"B-r-r, Major, I'm just giving you a friendly hint not to be indiscreet," the General said, with brusque good-humor and No. 5 (the amiable string). "Doesn't do for a soldier to get mixed up with these politicians. If I want you to go, I'll let you know fast enough."

"It seems to me, holding the views you do, General, you might protest personally to the Governor," remarked Staton. "He will have to listen."

"You're right, Major, there, though it's no use. It's humiliating myself, but it's *duty*. I'll do it to clear my conscience! I'll do it just as if he were a reasonable, thinking man whom you could convince."

The General buttoned his blouse, which bore streaks from his morning meal, and straightening his sagging shoulders, set out. He told himself that he would make a firm, dignified representation to the Governor and withdraw. Although the day was profanely hot, as all days

in Bar were to him, he managed to keep calm during his walk to the Palace, where he was admitted to the Governor's office before he had finished wiping his brow.

"I've come to present my view in this constabulary matter," he began.

"Yes, General, I should like nothing better. I want both sides," said the Big Fellow, with his ineffaceable smile of welcome that irritated the General.

"Sides!" Prairie Fire stormed, his resolution forgotten as he struck the desk. "Sides! There is only one side to this question! It's anarchy, treason, assassination! Of all the outrages ever——"

The Governor heard him through, begged to disagree with him, and then said that the constabulary must be. He hoped for coöperation from the commander of the forces—which was forthcoming in a choking, apoplectic "B-r-r!" as the doors swung to.

"I reasoned with him! I humiliated myself!" the General told Mrs. Strong. "I did my duty."

At least, he could address the War Department. That poor little right was left out of the wreck of the American army to one who had worn himself out in the service of his country. But he had to ask his Chief of Staff to compose his violent representation, which the Major, all by the law of the army, had to do in variance with his opinion. There was another thing that Staton wished to mention again after the letter was signed.

“ General, I think it is a mistake to send Companies D and E to Tabor. I am sure they will find no enemy there. It is a decoy. We would better keep at least E at Toll.”

The attentive Enrico looked up out of the corner of his eye from the translation he was so diligently making.

“ Toll? That place where the Governor’s trying out his love-me, love-you scheme? Why, no! They don’t need troops at Toll!” declared Prairie Fire.

Enrico smiled over his translation.

“ Still, I think they do,” urged the Major, who was convinced that if he might organize a proper intelligence bureau he would soon take care of Enrico and his kind.

“ Enrico says there are three hundred insurrectoes intrenched at Tabor, with Campo himself in command—yes, Campo! We’ll bag every man jack of ’em—and look here! Are you commanding or am I? ”

Oh! the General’s tropical liver was very bad, and he had just seen from the window the new constabulary with Sergeant Smith, detailed by higher orders from one of his own companies to command, marching across the plaza.

Dr. Cortina saw them, too, with a glitter in his eye. That underground route had explained that the constabulary was only the cloak for the formation of a band of city cutthroats who would murder their own countrymen in their beds. Now The Thinker wanted a diversion for the landing

of his two thousand rifles. He was planning an action to this end and to kill the confidence in the Governor which had been growing in some quarters.

The first word of what was in store came from Bakan. The young Lieutenant of that little garrison of twenty may have been careless to have allowed so many of his men to be playing ball when their rifles were in the barracks. If so, he paid the price when the very lot which Companies D and E had found missing forty miles away, approaching stealthily, sprang out of the jungle three hundred strong. With clubs, with sticks and stones the twenty fought, falling to the last man face to face with guerrilla trickery and taking a toll of lives double their own number.

Whenever there was fighting of importance General Prairie Fire was bound to be in it, shouting and swearing at his soldiers. For he was a brave man, whose courage rather than fitness to command more than a small charging party had won his star. He started with Major Staton for the interior at once by the river, on the *Paktowan*.

That evening the Governor had Mrs. Staton and Ellen to dinner. He was silent and preoccupied. Two or three times he put his hand to his head and seemed to rouse himself with an effort. They asked if he were ill, fearing the fever. He said "nothing but headache," which was the fever sign, although they were persuaded that

the real cause was heart-sickness over the news from Bakan.

It was still light when, with their coffee, they were seated on the veranda, and they would have said that the figure which turned the cathedral corner and came toward the Palace must be Don Francisco, but for the energetic stride. Don Francisco it was. His agitation transcended his born politeness as he came up the steps. He barely bowed to the Charming Lady and Mrs. Staton and his glazed eyes seemed to see only the Big Fellow.

“It is done! I am paid for my believing! I am paid for my folly!” he announced, in sinister abruptness. “They have burned Toll—my Toll! Our teacher there is dead! The insurrectoes are shooting my people to punish me! Your soldiers are shooting them and they are dying in the embers of their homes!”

“They have burned Toll! Toll!” said the Governor, blankly. “*Your Toll! My Toll!*”

He put his hands on the old man’s shoulders in his sympathy at the first comprehension of the import of this disaster.

The old Presidente drew away, with a toss of his head and a dramatic gesture. His features were drawn in the grimness of a man who has seen savage work in his time and faces more.

“No!” he said. “This is your town meeting! This your abc’s! This your constitutional rights of the minority! I said to them, ‘I bring you education; I bring you peace, in the Governor’s

name.' Mother of God! They have the peace—yes! I am finished with you. I go back to my people—to *my* people! I may fight you again. I know not—but I go!"

"Wait! Wait a little! See first who is to blame."

"I know not who is to blame. I care not. I know what *is*! I go!"

"But a minute!" and now he put his hand firmly on Don Francisco's shoulder. "Do you start at once?"

"To-night. I go by a trail I know to avoid the beaten track. They may kill me on the way. It is nothing. My own people may kill me—why should they not? May it please the Virgin Mother, I go to my people!"

"Then I will go with you, Don Francisco," the Governor said, quietly; "if I may?"

Don Francisco regarded him sharply. His old suspicions were reviving.

"It is a dangerous trail—a hard trail. It is not a trail for you, Excellency."

The Big Fellow looked down at the old man in a way that said it was exactly for him.

"I'm something of a traveler, myself," he announced. "I think I can go where you go and I'll be ready in five minutes."

"If you will, Excellency; but no guards—no one else!"

"No one!"

To every word Ellen had listened, intent and sympathetic, understanding to the full the blow

that had fallen on the Governor. When she heard that they were to go alone she sprang out of her chair and to his side.

"No! Not when you are not feeling well—don't, Big!" she said.

"Oh, that headache is gone. Don't mind about that," he answered, carelessly.

"If the natives know that you are traveling alone there is no telling what might happen! Your place as Governor is here!" she insisted.

"Kiddy will do very well in my absence. He knows the ropes."

"No, no! Please don't go!" She was pleading, tremulous.

Again, if he had not been too preoccupied to look for that thing he had longed for, he might have seen it in her eyes. But he was only sounding deeper the meaning of this new disaster, while his anger and impatience grew.

"I must!" he said, face set and unyielding. "My place is at Toll with Don Francisco. I am responsible for Toll! I am responsible to him for Toll!"

She liked him best when he was Olympian, with all his great reserve energy evident in look and word. She had never before seen him so thoroughly aroused and never been near him before in a crisis or when he was going into danger.

"It would be terrible for him if he were really coming down with the fever, wouldn't it?" she said to Mrs. Staton, after the Governor had gone to change his clothes for the journey.



"I must," he said. "My place is at Toll. I am responsible for Toll."

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

“ Yes, but he isn’t,” Mrs. Staton returned. “ He’s a big-hearted boy, the Governor is, so far as I can make him out. Sometimes, when he is laughing and yarning, I fancy he is pretty unhappy inside. This thing to-night bowled him out. The smile wouldn’t work. Then came Toll on top of Bakan and—what a man he is! What a task he has! Oh, that old beast Prairie Fire! ”

“ Old beast! ” said Ellen.

This helped them both.

“ But if he were coming down with the fever! ” she persisted.

“ Fever, fire, and flood wouldn’t stop him! ” said Mrs. Staton.

Ellen knew this. She recalled, regretfully, how cross she had been with him before she wrote that letter to the Personality which must have been in Washington for many weeks, now.

The two women went with him and Don Francisco as far as the corner of the cathedral.

“ Good-night, Big. Good luck! Keep professionally cheerful, anyway. You will win! It will be all right! ” Ellen told him. “ I’m sorry I called you a fool,” she added, with a smile. “ I didn’t really think you were. It was only poetic license.”

“ Perhaps I am. I needed going over,” he returned. “ Good-night, Two Braids. Good-night, Mrs. Staton and Kiddy. I’ll see you all in a couple of days.”

After the Governor with long steps and the Presidente with quick, short ones had disap-

peared under the last street light, a small figure came out of the Palace by the back way, in disobedience of orders, and carefully hugged the shadow as it followed the travelers.

“I must look after His Great Bigness,” thought Benito, the Guardian. “His Great Bigness is so simple.”

XXXVI

A RECKONING

THE Governor must save his second disciple; he must have a reckoning with the General. Purpose endowed Don Francisco's old body with youth, and well he knew his trail. He had fled along it from the Spaniards and crept back along it after the Spaniards.

Hands and feet he used with equal facility as he crawled over the root ribs of the great trees and let himself down embankments slippery with moss and seepage. He spoke only to mention an obstacle or a pitfall to his companion, who never fell behind, Benito dogging his footsteps. Stealthily that first disciple and unquestioning believer had overtaken the Governor and softly he had said: "Great Bigness, do not send me back!" and when he heard the Governor's pleasant laugh and felt a pat on his head he knew that he was forgiven.

The marchers' eyes became accustomed to the darkness; their ears to the rustle of the living things they wakened; their nostrils to the moist, dank odor of the unending life and decay of the tropical hothouse. In half an hour their saturated clothes clung in soggy folds to their skins—

and that is bad for a man who is coming down with the fever.

They passed through clearings where banana, hemp, and plantain were grown and the groups of nipa huts were silent, and then back into the jungle, with limbs and vines whipping their faces and the barbs of the bamboo tearing their breeches and flesh; and this was the story of the night, when muscles had no command except to answer the call of Toll. At dawn they saw the light breaking through the wet foliage and the miasma and they came to a swollen river over which the mist hung in a still, incandescent, suffocating plume.

The ford was flooded. Don Francisco proved an ill swimmer. The Governor saw that he was making little headway. In his stoical mien there was no plea for aid, and when it was given he received it with a vain protest of pride.

“Keep your hand on the ferryman’s shoulder. Keep cool!” said Big, cheerily.

“As if I did not know how to keep cool, Excellency!”

The current was swift and bearing against them. Inch by inch the center rush of '88 had to earn his way. His strength was flagging when he put his hand on a root and drew himself and his tow safely to the bank.

“You saved my life, Excellency,” said Don Francisco, as they lay blowing. He spoke in a fatalistic way, almost grudgingly.

By this time they were near Toll. The old man

advised a sharp lookout. Usually, he said, you might count on two or three insurgents in hiding along the path. It occurred to the Governor for the first time, as they again took up the march, that he was unarmed. "Great Bigness, if you please!" and Benito gave his own revolver to Big. The sun was drying their torn clothes, streaked with earth and foliage stains, on their backs—and that, too, was a bad thing for a man coming down with the fever.

Along the wayside they began to see refugees with their household goods and poor treasures. From the cover of trees and bushes hunted, curious eyes gazed at them, and Don Francisco whispered again his warning as they scrutinized the hedges for any sign of hostility.

"Look out, Great Bigness!" Benito started to cry; but before the words were fairly out they heard two shots, and the Governor dodged at the proximity of two hissing insects. The glint of the barrels in front of the two brown faces on either side of a clump of bamboos he had seen just as they fired.

He never could explain his action to himself afterward. Any charge of temerity he denied, because it never occurred to him that the two Mausers must have other cartridges in their magazines. Nor was what he did unique. More than once at sight of a big pair of shoulders, with a V of white flesh in the neck of the blue shirt, breaking through the jungle in fierce northern energy, trigger fingers were paralyzed. And the

Governor was exasperated, as he said, and felt ridiculous for having dodged. Possibly that is the best explanation.

“ You confounded little snipers! ” he yelled.

He indulged in some of the profanities, too. Considering that he used them seldom, he used them well. They came out with a lion-like roar as he started for these two little men, shaking his fist. At sight of such a commanding individual, as Willy Sweetser would say, they dropped their rifles and, eyeballs popping, threw up their hands.

“ *Viva* George Washington! *Viva* America! *Viva* President Unity State! *Viva* Bigness! *Viva* Goddam! *Viva* Prairie Fire! *Mucho amigo! Mucho amigo!* ” they cried, in all the English they knew.

The Governor seized either of them by his shirt back and what he gave them was a fair example of an old-fashioned spanking. Then he swung the rifles by the barrels and smashed them against the trunk of a mango tree. The natives who overlooked the incident sent it along the trail, growing as it traveled until it became a regiment struck powerless with a single strong, foreign oath.

One spectator, at least, was in nowise surprised. Had not Benito told the Presidente of Toll that His Great Bigness could be the Great Anger? That he could shake down the cathedral if he chose?

“ Is that the way the constitutional rights of the minority fight? ” Don Francisco asked, and

for the first time on that march there was a trace of pleantry on his lips, which faded quickly, however, as they started on up the brow of the hill to the plateau where the town of Toll had been. Only the Presidencia, which was of plaster, and the church were standing. The rest of the buildings were in ashes.

The General and some of the officers were in the church doorway; soldiers were lying asleep under its shade; other soldiers were coming in small groups from the chase, famished and staggering, sweat furrows on their cheeks. Men on guard paced up and down with languid stride, rifles under the arm or easily thrown over the shoulder. Their glances at the Governor were far from pleasant. They knew only the trail and they thought that his leniency made them more work.

For this experience of the last two days was not new in the category of thankless hardship. They had marched forty miles on bacon and hard tack, sopping wet, with no way to boil their coffee. At midnight they had started to surround the insurgents at Tabor, creeping forward in little parties on their bellies to find that the bird had flown, and to hear, in their weariness, the news of the massacre at Bakan and the taking of Toll.

You will sneak up on a lot of the boys when they're out playing ball, will you, you vermin? The hope of a fight at Toll gave tired legs new strength. Just bring out all the men and rifles you have in the open and if one company can't

take them you can have Bar and our pay, was the cry.

Outside of Toll, after collecting all the money, buried or hidden, that he could unearth, Campo, the island leader, who was in command, built a trench. From this his forces fired a round as the Americans charged. Then they touched the match to the houses of the Presidente and his friends and the schoolhouse as they fled. Through the flames and the nipa walls tore the Krag bullets in gusts from the men in khaki, who passed on into the country in pursuit while their breath lasted.

The sight of one fleeing Tongal with a rifle was the highest reward they could hope for; to see him go down, the taking of the brush in the chase. They were not fighting an enemy. They were after hornets that stung them in the darkness. In every adult they saw a possible assassin with a hidden rifle. They were men with minds steadily rasped by the routine of a treadmill of marching and killing.

And they had been most lenient in the beginning, giving every native the advantage of the doubt, trustful, generous, laughing with their prisoners, feeding and encouraging them, with the kindly patronage of big men toward little men. The insurrectoes understood this character and preyed on it. They knew, too, that once the chase was over the killing and the brusqueness were at an end, and their wives and daughters were always safe.

The women of Toll had no fear on this score, as their manner abundantly proved. A few with their children, who were his pupils, had gone out to the hillside with the burial party that interred the teacher and four of the infantrymen who had fallen in the charge. But mostly they were gathered in groups, silent and staring. Some of the men turned on Don Francisco threateningly. He answered them sharply or with fatherly ridicule, like the leader of his people that he was.

The Governor's first word was that a new school would rise where the first one had been; a new teacher will come, and we will keep on building new schools and bringing new teachers, need be;" and he was a pillar of determination as he spoke. Then he went among the people in his talk-it-over-together style. Taking their answers to his questions, he demonstrated to them that it was Campo who had fired the town and was responsible for their woes. They seemed to understand; they all said that they were friendly, and all were polite.

"When a town is burned the thing to do is to rebuild it," he went on. He called attention to an aged man and his wife, their thin hair like white bristles on their brown pates, who were trying to sift the charred rice out of the ruins of their house. "Here, we'll begin with a house for the old folks!"

He took the loan of a bolo and started for the bamboo. The people caught the spirit of the thing, and the owner asked for his bolo back after the

first log had fallen, in order that he might use it himself.

That old couple seemed pretty popular in the community. If Tongal shacks burn easily, they rise easily out of the palm leaves and bamboo at hand, without the use of a nail, and soon grandfather and grandmother were grinning with their toothless gums from the doorway of a new home.

The Governor saw an organization of relief begun and the citizens at work under Don Francisco's direction before he seated himself on the steps of the Presidencia and wrote out a cablegram to Washington, which did not take him long, for he knew as well what he wanted to say as he had known when he wrote that new law at Willy Sweetser's request. The evidence was garnered; the threshing over; the wheat in the sack.

His anger had risen steadily all the morning. It flamed up every time he looked at that vista of ashes. Thunder was in his mind as he crossed the street to the church, but the sight of the old General in his incompetency, mopping his brow, his whisky flask empty, softened Olympian rage that was about to break. He recalled to the General all his protests; he showed how clear the map of that island was in his mind; he developed the errors of the campaign in a way that made Major Staton, who was listening, think it was pretty good soldier talk. Prairie Fire was incoherent and profane in answer. He did not stop swearing until he was out of breath. Then the Governor told him the contents of that message to

the Department. The General sprang to his feet, choking and trembling and shaking his fist.

“ You’re to blame for this, Staton! ” (With String No. 1.)

“ If every officer were as loyal as he——” the Governor began.

“ Loyal, is it? ” (Strings No. 1 and No. 2.)

“ Major, you are detached from my staff. Return to Takar! And I’ll answer your cable, you politician! I’ll answer it! ”

But that effort, without any assistance from the Major, was a poor thing to put on record beside a certain exhibit written in a copperplate hand.

The Governor, in a reaction of kindness—after all, his dominant trait,—felt a little cruel as he handed in his cable at the field wire station inside the church. With the closing sentence he stated that Major Staton, by his ability and familiarity with the situation, was preëminently fitted to command the forces on the island.

It happened that the telegrapher, as the Big Fellow approached him, was talking to Private Parker of Company E. When the keeper of all men’s secrets—batting his eyes as he read the latest one, whose significance he could appreciate—turned to his key, Parker took from the table a small packet of papers which he had been showing to his friend. It occurred to him that the Governor might be interested in them.

“ Governor, here’s a bunch of stuff I guess I’ll give to my Captain soon’s he comes in,” he said.

“Took it off a gugu officer. Got him myself, the first fair shot I’ve had in two months. Wanted to fire at his red cap, but made it army regulations for the body. Right through the lungs and down he went, monkey red cap and all! Mebbe he was on Campo’s staff. They say Campy’s staff all do wear beautiful red caps.”

Private Parker had paid back a tithe of the debt he owed on account of his bunky. How do you suppose he lost his bunky? Why, Jim, who was always a simple, guileless fellow, was doing sentry go when one of your *amigo*, mealy-mouthed gugus came along and says to Jim, who had his rifle over his shoulder careless, what a big flock of birds that was on the church roof. Yes, just like that.

Jim looked over at the birds and out comes Mr. Gugu’s bolo and one down stroke in the neck and it was all up. Yes, that’s the kind of people these are. There’s just one way to teach ’em. When you see a white shirt in front of the line give poor old Jim, who’s worth the whole island, the benefit of the doubt. And Private Parker had marched from Tabor without stopping, and afterward hiked five miles into the brush, marsh water shucking in his shoes.

He was telling something about Jim as the Governor looked over the papers. This time Cortina had compromised himself with a letter in his own hand. It left no doubt as to who was the prime author of the messages sent out by the underground route.

"You can have 'em, if you like, Governor, but I'm going to keep that red cap to send home to Jim's old dad, just to let him know I scored one for Jim," said Parker.

"Thank you, Parker. They're just what I've been looking for."

Underneath Cortina's letter, among a number of editorial clippings sympathizing with the insurgent cause, was a newspaper portrait of a facile orator, with smooth face and mobile mouth,—The Thinker's "great statesman of the opposition,"—who had been exercising the constitutional rights of the minority in a speech. Other letters were commonplace and domestic. These the Governor passed over quickly to one in which, a week before the march to Tabor began, Prairie Fire's plans were explained in full. The Governor thought he recognized the clerical Spanish chirography. As he thanked Private Parker again and turned toward the church door he noted, among the group, the only loyal Tongal, dapper, neat, and attentive, standing near the General, and he took the letter to Enrico.

"Do you know this handwriting?" he asked.

Enrico bowed low.

"Excellency——" Enrico blanched. "Excellency—it is dark here. Let me take it into the light."

The faithful one slipped through the circle of officers in the doorway into the sunlight, and then bolted around the corner of the church.

Prairie Fire, writing on his knee, had not no-

ticed the incident, though Major Staton had and so had Clancy, who was waiting to take the Governor back to Takar on the *Paktowan*. Why trouble the General further when he was struggling over an official communication which must not be profane and Enrico was stealing through the jungle and that chapter ended? the Governor asked himself.

"I'll be with you, Clancy, in a minute," he said, and then he went to Don Francisco, who was in the center of a group, organizing and giving orders.

"Don Francisco, when shall I see you in Takar?" he asked.

"Excellency, you saved my life. I thank you, for I see I can still be of service," was the enigmatic answer.

"The little assistance I gave you have repaid by the order you are bringing out of this chaos. You'll be in Takar soon?"

"Excellency," he replied, with more than his usual politeness, "I don't know as I shall ever be in Takar. Excellency, all the work we have been doing together is over. I know no abc's or constitutional rights of the minority except Toll. I stay with my people."

"Time! Time! Wait and think, Don Francisco. Good luck and good cheer!"

"My mind is made up, Excellency."

Then the old Presidente turned to the natives around him and called for a *viva* for the Governor. They were always ready to be polite and

to cheer. He lifted his hat to them and promised them aid from government funds if they set to with a will to rebuild their town. The native mind was a puzzle, he was thinking for the thousandth time, as he turned away.

But Oriental indirection had not yet affected the soldiers who were lining up for coffee in the shadow of the church. They knew now that he had walked from Takar over night. His stained clothes and the slash of a bamboo thorn across his cheek were in evidence of the fact. The big Governor was on the job, anyway, and not afraid of spoiling his complexion. They had even heard of how he spanked the two bushwhackers, which was much to their taste. So they gave him a cheer, that was pleasant to hear, as he remarked to Clancy, on the way down to the river bank where the *Paktowan* was moored.

He now had a sense of his weariness. His head was throbbing; his bones were aching. Why, yes, of course. This was because he had had nothing to eat, he thought. A cup of coffee would soon put him right.

Clancy was infectious as usual. A Governor bathed and a Governor combing his hair in the little cabin of the *Paktowan* could keep in tune with sailor frivolity, while a meal waited under the Lord High Admiral's postage stamp of an awning.

"Hello! I thought I missed something!" he called. "It's that big panel picture of that pretty girl!"

“ Oh, Clem! ” said Clancy, as if struck by a memory. “ The mildew in the rainy season is bad for photographs. I packed it away. ”

“ I’ll not give the mildew time to spoil that breakfast! ” the Governor responded.

He tried to think that he was very hungry. But pretense of an appetite does not take the place of one for a man coming down with the fever, and he ate meagerly and told himself that what he really needed was sleep.

So he lay down on Clancy’s cot and fitfully napping, while the *Paktowan* sped down stream, thought of what he should do in the case of Cortina; of the girl in the photograph and of Ellen; of Uncle Theodore; of what answer, if any, the Department would make to his wire—if they might not, after all, take Prairie Fire’s side; and of a thousand things. Once, wakened from a doze by a shot of pain, he called for ice.

“ There isn’t any ice nearer than Pading, ” said Clancy. “ You must have been dreaming. ”

“ I think I was, ” said the Governor, unsteadily. “ That was a long walk, ” he explained, “ when you haven’t been taking much exercise, Clancy. ”

XXXVII

THE PERSONALITY TAKES NOTICE

OF sensational consequence, that news of the massacre at Bakan flashed under the ocean into the headlines of the newspapers. All the Big Fellow's friends, East and West, resented the stinging editorial paragraphs more than he would. Colonel Walker found a nutty flavor in them. They had Harden going. It was a good idea taking those islands, which could be most useful, after all.

Madame Mother told Aunt Julia that a public man must expect criticism, and the killing of a teacher, she added, made one realize afresh what a brave thing it was for a girl to go out to that wilderness when she might have married Ned Walker. This was a hint to Julia. Was Ellen really in danger? Aunt Julia asked; and she grew nervous and abstracted.

"Martha," she said, at length, "Ellen's been writing to me regularly, but I've not written her anything but to say I was well. She's asked me, or as good as asked me, for forgiveness for going away, but she can't forget that word I used."

"I shouldn't think she could."

"Martha!"

“ Yes, Julia.”

“ Martha, I’ve done wrong,” Aunt Julia announced, unconditionally. “ I am going to write her now, this minute, and say I am sorry. Yes, I am going to eat my humble pie because it is right I should. I never had any reason, never, to say it, and that is why I’ve stuck to it like a contrary fool.”

Madame Mother smiled happily, her object accomplished. Then it occurred to her that Mr. Hobber, bringing Mrs. Hobber if he could coax her out, would be bound to call that evening, as he always did when there was any news from Jimmy, and she looked about to see if the room was in order.

This time, however, Hiram broke his rule. He astounded his wife by announcing that he was going to Washington.

“ What for? ” she demanded, shrilly, as he stolidly packed his valise.

“ Business, Mrs. Hobber,” said he, “ and right on the night train, too,” which was a different night train from the one Uncle Theodore took.

“ It’s that Harden boy again, that’s what it is! ” declared Mrs. Hobber. “ You couldn’t think more of him if he was your own son.”

“ No, ma’am, guess I couldn’t! ”

“ Just as if you could fool yourself that wasting all this money’s going to do any good, when nobody’s asked you to, and just as if folks in Washington air going to pay any ’tention to you! ”

“ I guess they will, Mrs. Hobber, or I’ll have a

certain Congressman by the ears, an' his fences ain't in any too good condition in this district, either."

"Well, Hiram, don't go in with your head down. Talk right up to 'em!" was her parting word; "an' be sure you ain't got the second button in the top buttonhole of your vest!"

Both he and Dexter were afraid that the Personality might not see the Big Fellow as they saw him. Not so often as to Uncle Theodore, but once, at least, with the same candor the Governor had written to Hiram Hobber of his problem and his handicaps. The two self-appointed ambassadors did not meet, but saw the Personality at different hours, Uncle Theodore early and Mr. Hobber at the last moment, holding his head high and with all five waistcoat buttons in the right holes.

"You read that letter an' you'll see how patient a big man can be with a Jonah on his back, yes, sir!" said Mr. Hobber.

The Personality thanked him, and thus Mr. Hobber had his say as the Cabinet gathered for its weekly meeting and the cold, legal, Important Member came in from the apprehensive War Department, where they were asking, from desk to desk, how much longer this thing was going to last. The loss of a private here and there might be accepted as the penalty of policing; a garrison wiped out in broad daylight and a town taken, though quickly rewon, opened the bitter dispute anew.

Now, the Red Indian fighters demanded, would

the Personality see how abc's and town meetings incited the natives to massacre? And your young Governor of Bar, who was to handshake the bolo fiends into submission, had he acquired the *mañana* habit? Had he fallen a victim to tropical enervation and the Eastern coma which seem to transform the character of an official in six months?

The Personality was in the attitude of "I want to know," which meant that something was bound to happen in a certain island and soon. On the Cabinet table in front of the Important Member lay all the reports from Bar. The Important Member, getting his case in hand, had read them all through again. When the Governor's message from Toll arrived, the full light of the situation broke on him.

"You have seen a cabinet-maker planing and sawing and chiseling," he said, as he passed the pile to the Personality, "and studied what the result would be. That cable sets up the cabinet. It puts in the screws. And the General's cable is there, too."

That prehensile, questioning mind of the Personality was in Bar itself, as page by page he tore the heart out of these papers. Over the General's cable he had a short and knowing laugh. Then he took up the evidence which Hiram Hobber and that scholarly, white-haired old gentleman, with the mellow, pleasant voice, had left. Nor were these two the only men who had spoken for the Governor without call. A half dozen tele-

grams had arrived. When the Big Fellow won a man that man was one to rise instantly and say: "I'll not listen. I know him. He's my friend." This inside view was more convincing to the Personality than any official view.

It was plain, said the Personality, that Prairie Fire would have to go. Who should take his place was the next question, a question of paramount importance to the Governor. The official suggested was another General, known to his officers and men as Fuss and Fury. Of the same species as Prairie Fire, born of thirty years' fly-specking in little Western posts, he was of a different breed. In place of erupting he fumed. He would stop a soldier on a jungle trail to tell him that he was not wearing his cap according to regulations; he would occupy the whole staff for a week to account for the loss of a water bottle; and for the honor of the army he could not go out to dinner without an orderly at his heels.

Yes, but what had he done? demanded that insatiable Personality. Why, by holding his number on the list, thanks to his ability to take nourishment and keep on his legs, he had received his promotion in turn, as he would in a barber shop to the cry of "Next!" At present, he seemed to be a negatively satisfactory commander on a neighboring island which had been peaceful from the first. To send him to Bar, others knew if Washington did not, meant that the Big Fellow would have to begin his fight afresh, while every

new evil added to the sum of those the island had suffered would further sterilize the soil for the seeds of civil government that were being sown.

The Personality was becoming familiar with the species and he did not like General Fuss and Fury, except in full uniform to add to the gayety of New York's receptions and in the memory of the hard, realistic fighting against another type of enemy in his youth. Now that cable was read again for the last sentence which had hung in the Personality's mind. He saw in it more than postscriptum importance. Divining the Governor's handicaps, he understood how it was a cry out of official bounds for a commander of Big's choice when the responsibility was Big's. This Major Staton was the man for the place, if only he had the rank. Because he lacked that, the head of a great business institution could not choose an efficient manager for one of the local branches.

There was one way to give it to him. A list of Brigadiers was going in to the Senate that night. Why not make Staton a Brigadier? the Personality asked. Knowing glances were exchanged among the Cabinet officers. They knew what had happened. That tenth member of the Cabinet, who stood on the arm of the Personality's chair, had been getting his ear again. Other members warned him of the enormity of any suggestion of going over the heads of a hundred officers to make a Brigadier of an unknown Major, neither

er nor the son of any Great Body, who had
er led a picturesque charge or posed for a
ing picture machine.

Send for his record!" whispered Impulse,
the Personality consented.

he record was brought from the War Depart-
t, where, in brief and stinted phrase, the
er of an officer is written. That of dogged
or Staton had needed no herald to his fellow-
ers from the day he had left West Point. In
s of peace he had worked as hard at his occu-
on as a busy business man, doctor, or lawyer.
en there was no work he had made work. And,
he was something of a hero, too. He had
a medal of honor from Congress in an Indian
paign now forgotten; he had been wounded in
a, and he had made a long, grilling march in
Islands which all the sit-by-the-fires had said
ld end in starvation or massacre.

his made the Personality more friendly to Im-
e. Who knew Staton personally? Who had
him? Had anybody a photograph of him full-
th? Yes, full length, the Personality in-
ed. Oh, he was a peculiar Personality, no
ot, and most perplexing to that Oldest Cabinet
aber. Nothing in dress uniform was forth-
ing, happily, but two campaign groups were
ad which included a tall man, with muscle-
ed waist and broad shoulders under his khaki
se, who looked as if he could stand the strain
ny climate without cursing Almighty God for
ing made the sun shine hot enough in some

isotherms to grow oranges for our breakfasts and cocoanuts for frosting our cakes.

“Now, you know you want to do it,” said Impulse, who was most hopeful.

“It’s you that is always getting me into trouble,” the Personality answered. He gave Impulse a cuff to make the bothersome thing keep quiet for the time being. It would never do to draw all the fire which such an appointment would uncover at this time. Hear the buzz of indignation as the old fellows ruin the army again before the bridge game begins! Consider what the folks out Plymouth Rock way would say! It is remarkable how wrong-headed they can be on occasion, with the best of intentions. The Personality could hear them declaiming against this outrage of replacing a noble old soldier with a young upstart and personal favorite—the young upstart being forty-two years of age.

But Impulse was a most persistent suitor. A few people said it was Bad Impulse, while most people, including Uncle Theodore and Hiram Hobber, said it was Good Impulse and the best Cabinet appointment for time out of mind. This was not the first time Impulse had been cuffed. Well it knew that all was grist that came to the Personality’s mill and now was whispered the recollection that among the papers and letters that flashed across the Personality’s desk, like newspapers off the press, had been one, some weeks previous, from a certain school-teacher, which was promptly sent for.

A sober Cabinet enjoyed Ellen's passionate portrayal of conditions in Bar no less than another Cabinet had enjoyed Willy Sweetser's protest against Big's appointment. With a giggle, the Oldest Member suggested that this young woman was in love with the Governor. Then came a remark from the Important Member. Least of all would you have expected him to answer the Oldest Member's frivolity. But he had a wit which was like the winter sunlight on a frosty pane of glass, and that, we know, may be pleasant.

"If she is," said he, "it is only evidence of her good judgment. I should say he made a mistake not to propose at once."

Ellen was turning the scales. Impulse was elate. It had an ally in none other than the Important Member, who loved efficiency for efficiency's sake.

There was truth, truth in that letter, declared the Personality, tensely. But it would create a row, he admitted.

"You've been in a few rows before," said Impulse, pressing the point. "If you make him a Brigadier all the army can say is, Well, if that sort of thing is to be done you can't choose a better man than Staton."

Yes, by the Great United States, the Personality would! Flash! His mind was made up. That old Colonel, incapacitated for field command, who wanted a star for the New Year's Day reception and to be called General when so many

of the other old fellows were, must wait a little longer on the work unfinished ten thousand miles away. While Bar slept the night after that journey from Takar to Toll, when it was day at home, the thing was done. The Personality crossed out the name of the Colonel and substituted that of Major Edward Staton in the list of Brigadiers, lifting a load off a sick Governor's mind and bringing happiness to a Major's wife.

Mrs. Staton would see that star on her husband's shoulder at once. She had already provided herself with a Lieutenant-Colonel's silver leaf—but a star, a Brigadier's star! The most thoughtful of army women could not be expected to keep one in stock and certainly she could not borrow one from Mrs. Prairie Fire.

“I did not ask for it!” said General Staton, as he kissed her. Then he walked around the room and said, “I didn't ask for it!” and kissed her again. “It's a big thing and, Molly, there'll be some men under me who are older than I am and we must be very nice to them.” He was almost talkative, this silent, earnest soldier. “Molly, I can carry out my ideas about campaigning in the island, now. Think of that!” He kept on walking around the room between outbursts of speech, and no chronicler will attempt to say how many tours he made or how many times he kissed his wife before she exclaimed:

“Why, Eddy, you're in command this minute, according to the cable! All you have to do is to step across the street!”

“ Yes, Molly. I want to make it easy for the old General. But I think I will see the Governor first.”

They were sure that they owed their good fortune to him. It never occurred to them that Ellen had played any part, and if it had they could not have loved her more than they did. Let any secret between her and the Personality be given out from Washington. She was happy enough over the fact accomplished until the news came about Big.

The Governor was ill, but still refused to admit it. He managed to leave the *Paktowan* when she arrived late in the evening and with effort walked to the Palace. He slept from sheer excess of fatigue, but feverishly. When he awoke his will outweighed the band of hot lead that seemed to lie across his forehead. If any suspicion of what was coming crept into his mind, then it was the more reason that he should accomplish the day's work. He sent for Cortina at once; but before the doctor arrived came dispatches from Washington telling of Staton's promotion.

“ Kiddy! Kiddy! ” Big called. “ Here's news to drive away headache! Read that! ”

“ Boss,” observed Kiddy, solemnly, “ it makes me believe that the mills of the gods do get around to everybody's grist after a while.”

“ Yes, if it is a good grist,” answered the Governor, now having the strength and humor to receive Cortina, who, unconscious of why he was sent for, appeared in a most gracious mood.

“ Excellency, I hear you are a famous walker,” he said. “ It was a most remarkable feat, indeed, and it is bound to impress the native mind. I think you scarcely appreciate how important your journey was in reassuring the people. I feared that there would be trouble as soon as I saw the way Don Francisco was using his new position.”

Thus far the Governor allowed him to proceed. Then Cortina, who rarely looked anyone directly in the face, in the course of his shifting glances saw the Governor’s eyes. He stopped talking and moistened his lips.

“ You did not fear it, Cortina; you planned it,” said Big, shortly.

The plotter recoiled slightly. He went on playing with his gold-headed stick. He tried to smile.

“ Excellency, I see I am misunderstood,” he said. “ Excellency, your evidence! ”

The Governor handed him a transcript of the letter which Private Parker had found. Cortina, having recovered himself, read it benignly.

“ It is unfortunate,” he returned. “ Excellency, what is your pleasure? ” He was polite and cynical. “ Will you send me away or try me? ”

“ I could try you, but I shall not.”

“ No, Your Excellency is too wise. Your Excellency knows too well what scandal it would create in America. I should have statesmen making a hero of me, not to mention the press—yes, of me, as an exponent of down-trodden liberty.”

Cortina, who lacked not courage or audacity of

a type, cracked his green skin in a fleeting grimace. He thought he had struck home.

“ I will listen to no such quibbles! ” said the Governor. “ I will put you under arrest at once. I can try you on a half dozen charges, and so I shall, by the constituted law of this land. ”

The Governor was outwardly serene, although his head was throbbing. He had given Cortina one final glance and he was ringing up the military telephone to call the provost guard.

A half dozen charges! What else had that big man in his possession? Cortina's feelings must have been much like those of John Byng when he was asked, “ Did you or did you not? ” His eyelashes flickered. He put his slim fingers on the edge of the desk and leaned forward, his head near the Governor's elbow. His bravado was gone.

“ Excellency, ” he said, appealingly, “ I fear I am a natural mischief-maker. It is in this mixed blood of mine. Education and jealousy make me dizzy. Excellency, you are in the right and I am wrong. Will you not give me the privilege of a gentleman and let me take the first steamer to Spain? ”

Cortina by his plotting through Enrico had caused the disaster of Toll, the loss of Don Francisco! The Governor thought of these things, with his bones aching from the effects of that night journey. A big man himself, he looked down on this little skinny man, with his ferret eyes, his tricky expression, and generosity pre-

vailed. He told the officer of the guard not to mind.

“ Excellency, your gracious clemency wins me to your side,” said Cortina, rising. Secretly he was contemptuous. What had the Americans but money? How could they win when they were so simple-minded?

But Cortina would not depart yet. No, he must wish His Excellency good health and warn him, in polite farewell, to care for himself better in the fever season. While he was speaking Kiddy entered, bringing a dispatch. The Governor saw that the signature was Francisco Martinez and laid the dispatch to one side.

“ Thank you, Cortina,” he returned, and added, on impulse: “ You have a right to your opinion. You have a right to fight for it. If you wish I will not restrain you from joining the insurgents. Take your side against us in the open—go ahead! Then, if captured, you will be a prisoner of war.”

“ Excellency, I think I like the climate of Spain better,” he answered, though he meant, all the time, to join the insurgents. “ Excellency, adieu! ”

He offered his hand, but something in the Governor's fever would not let him take it. This was more American politeness, Cortina thought, as he withdrew. He hated the Governor, who chose Don Francisco for a friend, and would not receive his intellectual self into intellectual companionship.

“ If he had only said, ‘ Yes, that is my side; I will fight! ’ then I could have admired him,” the Big Fellow told himself, as he took up Don Francisco’s dispatch.

“ I remain with my people,” it began, in his characteristic way, “ to protect and help them. If you will send me two hundred rifles I promise to defend Toll myself and never fire a shot at your soldiers, unless you attack the town. You may send your teacher and he will be safe. I will not send my troops outside the province. I will use them in the province only to punish the brigands. Once I took your word. Will you now take mine? ”

The Governor read this carefully a second time and thought over it before he put it back on the desk to wait on General Staton’s coming. Then he turned to other affairs, which he felt, in some uncanny, far-off way, ought to be finished before the day was over. He looked to every last detail; he made every last necessary signature, as if he were going on a journey. Still he insisted, in league with his will, that he was not ill. He told Kiddy, when Kiddy protested, that his flushed face was the effect of sunburn, and he minded that he must be ready with this excuse to Staton.

Every paper had been attended to except Don Francisco’s message and he had already written to Madame Mother and Uncle Theodore briefly, for his hand was unsteady, in glowing optimism over the turn of affairs and was just finishing a letter to Willy, now in Japan on his way to Bax,

when Staton came in, and his eyes lighted with such a welcome as no caller had ever yet received in that office except Ellen.

“ Well, General! ” he said, with a happy accent on the rank pregnant with meaning, and that was all. It said everything for both; everything that they might have spoken and everything that the limitations of language would have left unspoken had they tried to express themselves. The Big Fellow was in a hurry to clean up affairs before starting on a journey and Staton, fresh in the saddle, was preoccupied with the march to come.

“ The outlook is the worst it ever has been, Staton? ”

“ Yes, Governor, it is. ”

So they both candidly admitted the truth at the start.

“ I hope we shan't have to repeat Strong's continual call for reinforcements, and with better management we may do the trick with the troops we already have! ”

“ We shall! ” said Staton, firmly. “ I wanted to hear you say this before wiring the Department. These Bakan and Toll affairs, making chaos, require that such changes as I intend to make should be initiated at once. In these I wish to carry out the spirit of your policy, so far as military necessity will permit. When it will not I will explain my reasons and I shall be ready to listen to yours. ”

“ This is strange talk from the commander of

the forces and very grateful," the Governor said, knowingly.

"Now, I think I understand your policy, but may I hear anything you have to say? and afterward it will be my turn."

The Governor leaned his head on his hand, which was unusual in one who always sat erect even when writing, and went over his whole plan with the terseness of a man under a strain. Then Staton spoke and, head on hand, the Governor listened and had little more to say before they fully understood each other, and the Governor took up the one remaining thing, Don Francisco's telegram.

"I should like to do this," he told Staton. "What do you think?"

How Prairie Fire would have stormed at the idea! Staton was plainly doubtful.

"It's a pretty big risk," he said, "giving two hundred new Krags to insurgents. If Don Francisco is beaten the rifles are taken. Do you trust Don Francisco?"

"Yes. He is a fighter. They'll not get his rifles."

But the Governor was of a trustful nature, Staton knew. How far did he discriminate in placing responsibility?

"Governor, I am going to ask you who else in Bar, outside of our own officials, you trust really, trust fully in your heart—men of importance?"

Besides Don Francisco and some other Presidents and natives the Big Fellow had to admit

that, in his heart, he trusted only Thompson, that young American mining man, and that straight-speaking young Australian, Horswell, Parkowitz's assistant.

"Very well! I agree!" said Staton.

Now the Governor's desk was quite clear. Something seemed to snap in his head. Trying to rise at the same time as Staton, he reeled and put his hands on the arms of his chair to steady himself. The General found them like fire to the touch. Big saw the cracks between the hardwood boards of the floor writhing and the boards themselves tipping as his friend supported him to his room.

"You know how to keep things steady, Staton," he repeated two or three times on the way, and from his pillow, where he sank, beaten by the enemy he had fought hard, it was good to look at Staton's firm jaw and square shoulders and to think, however hazily, that General Prairie Fire was not in command. And for this he had to thank Impulse, which was then sitting on the corner of the Personality's desk at Washington on the lookout for a fresh opportunity.

XXXVIII

THE FEVER DEVIL

BENITO'S step was the softest, softer than the doctor's or the nurse's. An automaton, he pulled the punka over the sick bed in noiseless, even swing.

"His Great Bigness will not die. He is too big for the fever to kill him," he would whisper to himself, in a brave sort of reasoning which was father to the wishes of all.

When the Admiral said that it would be easy to put the patient aboard the flagship and have him north in a cooler climate before the crisis came, the Big Fellow, in some subtle way, divined, if he did not overhear, the suggestion and rose from his pillow in restless protest.

"No! no!" he cried. "I'm not finished here yet!"

It was a bad case, the army and navy surgeons agreed. A physique that could withstand that journey to Toll in the first stages of fever and a will that could keep him at a desk until he collapsed, reeling and delirious, only made it worse. But the will might play a better part, and in this the surgeons also agreed. The Governor himself was determined that he would get well.

Before the crisis a visitor brought him good news. Don Francisco, who came down the river in a native dugout, went straight to the Palace, where he met the General in the hall.

“Your march from Takar to Toll was in the dry season,” he said, proudly, and Staton was glad to grant him all the honor he desired. “He and I walked in the rainy season. He saved my life. He is my friend. As soon as my troops are trained to fight with your rifles and defend Toll I will go on with the work he taught me to do.”

Ellen thought that it might help Big if he could see Don Francisco.

“Someone has come,” she whispered to him.

The Big Fellow opened his eyes and knew that sturdy figure in the doorway and smiled.

“It is as it was before, Excellency,” said the Presidente of Toll.

“Don Francisco! As before! This is good—good! We’ll do much together,” he uttered, disconnectedly. “When I am back on my feet we can start right.”

He closed his eyes and Don Francisco padded back into the hall.

“Will you tell me with your tick-tick wires every day how he is?” the Presidente asked the General. “But His Excellency will get well—yes, he will! The Honorable Lincoln would be too lonesome without him.”

Big liked to hear Kiddy’s voice and Staton’s. Otherwise, he was restless and kept calling for them, especially Staton, “who is keeping things

steady—keeping things steady,” he would say. When they appeared he was reassured. Ellen he wanted more frequently. In a lucid moment he would look up at her, surprised and pleased, with a faint:

“Hello, Two Braids!”

“Hello, Big!” she would answer, as cheerfully as she could. “You’re doing finely.”

It was unearthly and terrible to her to see him lying in that darkened room with his face, grown thinner, against the pillow—to see him, Big who was never sick before, helpless as an infant.

“I will do it! I *will*!” he said, in a moment of delirium, exposing the heart of his policy. “They’ve killed twenty of our soldiers! They’ve burned Toll! But I will do it—I will—and with mind and character and patience and without killing. Yes, with mind and character, and I’ll walk across the island unarmed and I’ll see all the Tongals happy and peaceful, running their own village affairs, before I go.”

At times only Ellen could quiet him. He seemed to know her touch if she put her hand on his head.

“All right, Two Braids, all right.”

In his wanderings he never mentioned her except as the Two Braids of the days before she went away to school. He spoke of everyone else; he lived over many scenes. Was there some psychological action that set her apart in his mind?

Yes, he considered her as a little girl, she told

herself bitterly, not important enough to enter into his life. Then she accused herself of selfishness for allowing such thoughts to have a place. What did it matter? If they should lose Big—no! She could not bear to go beyond the hyphen of the unexpressed.

When he lay so quiet that he no longer spoke or noticed anyone and the doctor said that in a few hours they would know the worst, she left the Palace. She had not the courage to wait for the look on the doctor's face that would tell the story.

In these trying hours no one had anything to say. The General read reports whose lines lay one over the other; Mrs. Staton tried to sew; Kiddy Witherbee stood motionless, staring out of the window at nothing; Ellen went to her room and threw herself on the bed. Thoughts came too fast for her to be still. She arose and went to the table by the open window and tried solitaire, shuffling frantically and playing rapidly, not noticing that some of the cards had fallen on the floor. Yes, rapidly for a time, then desultorily, then stopped, while her gaze wandered to the plaza.

The faces of the natives seemed cunning and malicious. Their slow steps had the deadliness of fate. That old cathedral was ghostly, unnatural, and foreign; its moss patches so many ugly blots. That Palace was a prison; its white walls under the blazing sun oppressed her sight. She looked away from the foreground to the perspective of the green hills, which were a black, shiny, repellent,

unreal, theatrical green, and recalled the odor of the jungle and the march that Big had made. Even the retrospect of her own school-children at their Red, White, and Blue made a singsong of mockery in her ears.

She closed her eyes and saw another world: Aunt Julia was chiding her; she heard Madame Mother's gentle voice, Hiram Hobber's nasal drawl, Pam's soft chuckle. She saw the snow on the ground, the trees bare, and heard the sound of sleighbells; the lawn and the first wild-flowers in spring breaking out of the moist earth; the cherry-trees in bloom and fruiting, and all the green of the oak, the maple, and the beech, fresh, hopeful, in its youth, and again the wondrous tints of October, and heard the singing of the crickets cheerfully welcoming a season's change in the land where the sunlight kisses the frost.

Beside those things of home, how repugnant all this she saw from the window—all this monotony of continuous heat and vegetable life that smothered human life! She was personal; she was bitter. She was angry with Miss Destiny. If they should kill Big—Big who was worth all the Islands together! Lips tight set and eyes glazed, she stared at the square and saw General Staton coming from the Palace. He would know. He was coming at a rapid gait, but to her all too slowly and then all too fast. Could she tell the news from his face which so well concealed his thought? Then in a swooning moment things became splintery—and she did not seem to see him

at all, but came back to herself with the sound of his voice. He was standing under the window and swinging his hat as though he had won the greatest charge of history.

“It’s all right! He’ll get well!” he called to Mrs. Staton, who was on the porch. “It’s all right, all right, all right, Molly!”

Ellen ran downstairs, where the three looked at one another through tears. Their unspoken rejoicing told each one how deep a hold this big man had on that little community.

“He is very weak but quite himself,” the General said, “and he asked for you. You do seem to be his favorite nurse.”

He went to the telephone and over all the military wires sent the glad news ticking through the island to the troops, to Don Francisco, and to the natives, while Ellen hastened to the sick-room, where the Big Fellow lay, ghostly white and haggard on the pillow, scarcely able to turn his head and smile.

“Hello, Two Braids!” he said. “We did it! We won!”

“Oh, Big! Everyone is so happy!”

In an impulse, she kissed him on the forehead and flushed for having done so, while a trace of color came to his cheeks and flickered away in his exhaustion, as he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

Now they had to look forward only to his recovery, while Staton went among the provinces, organizing and planning.

“ I’m keeping things steady,” the new General told the Governor. “ But you are not to worry or think about it. There’s no bad news.”

When Big was able to sit up he began to ask questions.

“ Boss,” said Kiddy, “ the doctor says that to recuperate you ought to go to a cooler climate; but as you won’t, he and the General and I have entered into a conspiracy. There’s big work coming and we want you ready for it. When you are able to go into harness you’re to be put in the know all at once. Let you have a hold and there’ll be no keeping you from wanting the whole thing. So you are to get nothing.”

The Big Fellow demurred at first. How was he to keep his mind off his island? After a little thought he said:

“ All right, Kiddy. You and Staton keep it steady till I’m ready to ride.”

With his rapidly gaining strength there was nothing for him to do except to sit on the shady side of the porch and receive the short calls of the officers, soldiers, and natives, and the little group of friends in Takar. Father Tim could read Mr. Dooley in a way to bring Archey Road to Bar, while Staton, when present, had as little to say as Mr. Hennessy. W. W. developed another side in his droll, lisping rendition of Huckleberry Finn, a character after his own heart; and Sergeant Smith—Captain Smith, we beg his pardon—had some most remarkable stories about adapting the native mind to the constabulary, which he

never told until he had supplied them with legs so they could travel well.

“You’re all so good to me,” the Governor would say, now and then. “It’s a good world, I tell you, W. W.”

“Yes, indeed,” said W. W., “and when you consider how bad it was once, why, it’s quite encouraging to anybody who is trying to make it still better.”

Law reviews, books, magazines, and newspapers, not to mention the letters immediately devoured, had accumulated in a pile under the cozening eye of Kiddy, who was a strange sentimentalist in that he did not want them opened till the Boss was ready. Ellen took off the wrappers and read from them whatever Big chose to hear. Even after he was able to read himself, he preferred to depend on her; while Clancy, when in Takar, would sit with his hands clasped over his knees and his back against a porch pillar watching Ellen more intently than he listened.

It was when Clancy was not present that the Big Fellow recurred to a matter that had troubled him.

“I suppose I talked a lot of foolishness and unreality when I was sick, Two Braids,” he said.

“No, Big. Just of home and friends and work—and made everybody feel that they knew you and liked you better—nothing that your old comrade hadn’t heard before.”

In this way, working relations, if they had ever been broken, were perfectly reestablished.

XXXIX

BIG'S CAREER AT A CRISIS

NO Enricos now shared the secrets of the commander of the forces. Through loyal natives and a proper scouting service he was better informed of what the enemy was doing than the enemy of what he was doing. The troops were no longer marched on fruitless errands. When they went on a "hike" they usually bagged the game they sought.

In a few words Staton rendered an account of his stewardship to the Governor without requiring even the No. 5 String of profanities to make a situation clear.

"I have done as you desired," he said, finally.

"You have, precisely," the Governor assured him.

No schoolhouses had been burned and no teachers killed and in the garrison towns a better spirit was prevailing. Yet Staton had only held the situation steady. His account, although he himself did not make the point, was a revelation of what a disaster had been inevitable if Prairie Fire had remained much longer in command.

Cortina, in hiding in the jungle, was really master of the native forces through the hand of

Campo, while the brigand Pardo had over five hundred men. In all, Cortina had four thousand Mausers, it was said, which he had brought in before the change of Generals. Each man keeping his own rifle and ammunition, the insurgent forces drilled by night in the mountains, returning to their homes by day, while they waited on the word for the grand attack and victory that The Thinker had promised them.

To offset this bad news came good news from Don Francisco.

“ Good friend who saved my life,” he wrote, “ Señor and Señora Sanchez send their most beautiful salutations on Your Excellency’s benign restoration to health. If you do not remember Señor and Señora Sanchez, I am the one to tell you that they are the old couple that you honored with cutting the first bamboo for their house.

“ All the days when the tick-tick wire so very sad and slow it told us nothing except you were alive, Señor and Señora Sanchez they sit in their door and say: ‘ His Bigness is too big for the fever to kill him; he will live.’ When the tick-tick wire it said so fast and so happy how the soldier doctor who finds out things so quick say you would get well, Señor and Señora Sanchez were like little children for happiness, and they say: ‘ We told you so. Now will you say the old folks have no wisdom in their white pates? ’ We make the great holiday for everybody and the school-boys and girls they march around singing the Red, White, and Blue. I tell them that was the

proper respect to show, and my people do as I say.

“ Good friend, I hear you sit on the porch and eat with grand appetite of seven giants to bring back your great strength. I would come to brighten my eyes by looking on your face, but Don Francisco of Toll he is the busy man and he has many friends who wait for him on the trail outside Toll to make of him the corpse. If they can kill Don Francisco it will be a good stroke for all bad men, and Don Francisco he likes that life you saved so well that he make a disappointment to these friends.

“ I am writing a letter to the General, asking him for the Mauser ammunition for our fifty new rifles. Yes, friend, I am a thrifty man. I make the two hundred rifles grow. I now have two hundred and fifty and Aguillo he work on the new market road I build.

“ Aguillo, that boy, I knew him when he was little! He had the good looks and the smartness which make a fool of him. The cock-fights and the gambling for Aguillo! He never work, but would be a brigand, a grand brigand like the Pardo, and from the brigand he rise to the insurrecto, and he say that old Don Francisco he was what your soldiers call the back number. He dig me the trap. I fall in, he think, and I push him in and he and his brigands they dig now, but not the trap. I was not the back number; Aguillo, he was.

“ Good friend, it is not, is it, a wrong for the constitutional rights of the minority to make the

brigand work? Did the Honorable Lincoln think that the people should earn the rice for the brigand who steal and kill, and let the brigand sit in the shade to eat it?

“ I give Aguillo such good advice as the Honorable Lincoln would. I tell him that he has held up many people on the way to market and he ought to be happy to make a good road to market. Oh, yes, and I tell him that if he study the constitutional rights of the minority and learn how to work I will let him work for himself like an honest man one day.

“ Our new teacher has the windows to his face as big as the Kiddy of His Bigness. He is what you call in the America the baseball crank. When he said he could make a ball curve I greatly disbelieved so strange a travel tale; and he tell me to stand behind a tree and he would prove to me. I stood behind the tree and I get the sore shoulder and also what your soldiers call the laugh. I try to catch the ball and I hold my arms out stiff and my fingers get the great pain. I will not try again. It is not for the old man to make the new tricks or to be foolish before his people.

“ The young boys they learn the baseball fast and they make the great noise which the teacher calls the rootings, and the rootings are greatly important. We have the two teams, a team for the north side and the south side of the street, and they practice the curve instead of the killing and they make many quarrels about the umpire, who is like the Governor. He has all the troubles

and is not in the game. I tell the teacher that the baseball bat is better than the bolo and he say: 'Don Francisco, you understand the Honorable Lincoln very well.'

"Good friend, I may get the three hundred rifles and make the new road still longer yet. Good friend, Toll is safe. Don Francisco keeps the faith. I send you my salutations and obeisances."

"You were right about Don Francisco," said the General. "Giving him the two hundred rifles was the best stroke yet. I wish there were only more of him. But you will find, Governor, that your seed is already bearing some fruit. It is bringing the industrious and peaceful to your side."

"Good! Good!" cried the Governor.

"But the lawless are the more bitter, and bitterest against Don Francisco. The wolves form in packs for the fray. We must have harder fighting than we have seen yet. The soldiers' turn is coming."

"Let us send for Don Francisco," said the Governor, changing the subject.

The old Presidente refused a guard, though his life was in danger the minute he left his own province. Over night he slipped down the river in a dugout, and in high good humor appeared not long after sun-up at the Palace.

"I have the great news," he said, "which I heard only a few minutes before my departure from a man I can trust. Excellency, you were too

simple when you let the Doctor Cortina go. You should have put him in jail."

"I took his word. He lied," answered the Governor.

"And as an exile he could have returned to the island from Pading," put in the General.

"Cortina, he has the gift of rousing the natives," continued Don Francisco. "He has the great brain with the hell streak in it, and he would do the great thing. He sees you keep fewer troops in Takar. With the swoop of the eagle, when the dry season begins, he will gather his bands and sweep down on the capital."

"We shall not be idle in the meantime," said Staton.

The Governor, as they were talking, had on his lap a new military map of the capital and vicinity, which, as a part of Staton's indefatigability, the staff had been preparing. He was looking at it as he spoke.

"Now the crops will soon be in such a state," he said to Don Francisco, "that the people will have only to wait on the ripening, and Cortina will probably strike about that time."

"I should say yes, Excellency."

"We could bring all the friendly people, who fear the insurgents, into our garrison towns for a time without much trouble and protect them there. Then they could return and harvest their crops."

"Yes, Excellency. Five out of six of the people want only peace. One out of seven was always

a brigand. All the fightings make the brigandage good business, as your soldiers say. Two men out of seven with the rifles, and that is what you call the military power of the minority."

"Then, General, if Cortina wishes to come in with our garrison in his rear we might let him come," the Governor concluded.

"Governor, you plagiarize my plan of campaign!" returned Staton, who could see the map with his eyes shut. "I shall be criticised, but I'll do it. And if we should fail—well, we'll bear the blame and the scoffing. Therefore we must not fail!"

Don Francisco was something of a strategist himself, as we know. He caught the drift of the plan in a gesture of enthusiasm.

"When the garrisons march in behind and it is thus"—he interlocked his fingers—"I may have the three hundred rifles to help."

"And possibly we may bag them without much loss of life," the Governor suggested, hopefully.

Staton shook his head decidedly.

"No! Our forces are so meager that a hard fight will be necessary," he declared. "And perhaps they will smell a rat and we can't draw them in."

"Yes, Cortina is the ferret for cunning, but his vanity makes him the fool," Don Francisco added. "I think he will come—if we encourage him."

"The toll will be heavy," said Staton. "Finally, Governor, shall I go ahead on this plan? Do

you agree? Shall we try to end it all in one blow? ”

For eighteen months the Big Fellow had been in Bar. Come to establish order, disorder ruled. Come to make laws, he might not yet frame them. What would Washington say to that young civil Governor, backed by a commander of his own choice, when it heard of a battle at the door of the capital? What would the public say? The real crisis of Big's career was near.

“ Go ahead! ” he said, stiffening, but still with the hope that he could separate the wolves from the sheep by means of mind and character and without killing.

XL

WILLY AS A TRAVELER

THERE was no doubt of it. Anyone familiar with his habits would have known by the havoc at the landing-place, without seeing Willy himself, that he had arrived. In his retinue were three Chinese, two Filipinos, a monkey, half a dozen parrots, and a tall Sikh with a mountainous turban.

“Don’t ask me where I got them!” he said, after he had hugged Big as well as he could, considering Big’s size and his own height, and Big had fairly lifted him off his feet. “They just came along. They saw I was a good thing. They get in one another’s way, but they’re like most folks in that they all know when it’s pay-day.

“Here, there, you, Ballyhoo, you leave the parrots to Long Sing. Ballyhoo’s in disgrace. He let my best parroquet investigate the first electric fan he had ever seen. Then Ballyhoo stuck his finger in to see why the parroquet lost his head. Pack along here, Luiz and Jose, and you, Ah Ching, get the things into the carriage and don’t try to ride on the wheels. Let’s walk, for Heaven’s sake, and feel we’re alive! I’ve heard

the call of the East, all right—calling me home to apple-pie land! ”

Adroitly, in this interval while Willy paused for breath, as they saw the caravan start, Benito in charge, with themselves in the rear on foot, the Governor managed to say a word. He asked about the folks at home.

“ Going to tell you soon as I get moving. Say, but it’s good to see you, you old deserter, old Olympus, old law and the light! But you’re thin—that fever, eh? I nearly went wild when I heard of it. I think I abused the Minister and the Consul in Japan because they belonged to the same government that sent you out.”

“ And the folks? ” Big asked.

“ Uncle Theodore and I dined at Jerry’s the last night, and we went up the street singing and he saw me aboard the train. Jerry hasn’t changed. He stands there in the same judicial, far-off way, as much as to say, when you’ve made up your mind that you’re going to have oysters on the half and a steak Jerry style and potatoes Jerry style, when you’ve been intending to have them all the time, I’ll pass the order to the cook.”

“ Don’t talk about oysters on the half shell and such things when I’ve got such an appetite after the fever! ” Big pleaded. The soldiers would desert the garrisons if they thought there were oysters on the half shell in Takar.”

“ Just old chicken, year in and year out, steady company chicken down here, isn’t it? I know!

I've been on it two weeks. Same linen-legged, tow-breasted chicken! At least, I suppose it's the same. I never could make any marks on it to identify it when it came back the next meal. The mangos are pretty good, though, if you go at them in a free and manly way, with no handicaps, by taking off your clothes and getting into a bathtub."

"But the folks?" Big pursued. "Madame Mother and Aunt Julia?"

"Well, I'm kind of an adopted son at Bolton, now. I've been helping to keep the lamp burning to welcome the prodigal home. They're well and happy and proud! I ran up a number of times and took them out in the machine. 'If you will not go too fast,' they said, 'to start with.' I said, 'How fast?' and they consulted and said about three miles an hour. I had Pam along, too, on the front seat with me. 'Dis yeah ain' flyin', no how,' he said, 'but it shuah beats any skatin' in summer time I evah heard of.' They kept saying a little faster and a little faster, these two old ladies, so serene and their eyes so bright, till I had it up to forty, and I said to myself, 'Look here! It might be all right if they were my mother and aunt, but I take no risks when they're Big's;' and I kept it down after that."

"Willy, there never was anyone like you!" said the Big Fellow. "Now I do know that they are all right. I have their letters, but these, I might be sure, would be cheerful."

“Just as yours are,” returned Willy.

“Yes, just as mine are! And it’s been a hard fight! a hard fight!” This he could confess to his closest friend.

“With the heat to bear at the same time. This heat is like sitting in a hot pressroom watching blank paper roll off the press forever. Everything grows but men and nothing happens. They talk about the beautiful Pacific. It is, if you like to sail over a mill pond. I nearly went mad. Talk about rest! I never could see any rest sitting still and looking at water. If it hadn’t been for you being out here, I would have gone back from Honolulu. Think of not seeing your own newspaper for a month! But I did the best I could. I bought two barrels of firecrackers at Honolulu, and I used to throw them from the stern of the steamer, just to get some kind of action and break the monotony. I used to go down and sit in the engine-room when it wasn’t too hot and imagine it was the pressroom and feel quite at home. Then I started a paper aboard the ship—editorials, ads, interviews—got up mock trials, games, races, pools, knew everybody from the missionaries and the card-sharpers to an earl, and I did manage to live through that deadly voyage.”

“And others of our friends?” Big asked.

“Well, John Byng’s not our friend exactly, though we have had a good deal to do with him. He’s trying the new game of journalism because he thinks it pays. *The Courier* reminds me of a

peroxide blonde, whose hair hasn't been touched up for three months."

"And Hiram Hobber?" For the Big Fellow had a very warm place in his heart for Hiram.

"I had him out in the machine, too," said Willy. "He's getting into politics a good deal. I think he'll control the delegates from his district to the next State convention—but that's his business and mine." Then Willy grew serious. "How much longer is it going to take you?" he asked; but without waiting for answer he proceeded. "Big, this trip has converted me. I used to think that the world was pretty large, but I had to travel only half-way around it to find that it is all taken up and the chances of annexing another planet are poor at the present lookout. If it's grown so small in the last century, what of the next? Why, we're going to be crowded and glad of anything as big as a city lot. We haven't any selfish interests except to spread our ideas and to keep a coaling station; but if we get too intent at home, maybe one day when we want this harbor, far from Bolton and the home plate, we'll find it is not to be had. And now I know what a great problem you have and that you are the man for it and it was right for you to come—but not for you to stay! No, sir!"

"Willy! You do bring a message of cheer when I most needed it, and, like a good reporter, you are on hand for the crisis."

Then the Big Fellow took Willy entirely into his confidence, while Willy, who could be a good

listener, grasped the situation point by point with the liveliest interest. Something was going to happen, something new to him, and so he had another reason for being glad that he was present. For the bands unmolested by the garrisons were closing in. Benito had become a scout, tireless, active, sly, clear-eyed, confident in that trick of accurate shooting which he had learned from Staton and Clancy. Scores of other trusted natives were going and coming through the jungle, bringing word of the enemy's plan and advances, while Staton kept moving in the pins toward Takar on his map.

"Steel Fingers isn't missing any cards," said Willy, the next day; for it took him only a few hours to know everybody in town. "He's +100 soldier, all right. And I'd hate to be in Parkowitz's shoes. In fact, I'd as soon be Byng as Parkowitz. Steel Fingers has something on that shady gentleman, all right, and Parkowitz is under surveillance and he'll not leave this town till the General says he may go."

"I didn't know this," said the Governor, thoughtfully.

Willy was setting the house afire again.

"Now, hold on! *You* don't know it!" he insisted. "You aren't going to begin to talk evidence and personal rights and trial. Parkowitz is the General's business. The trouble with you, Big, is you're too soft-hearted. You've got a big, armor-steel backbone, but you let people prod around behind your back in the dark with knives

before they find it. For a job of this kind you ought to throw out a buttress to it or put up a sign of warning: 'Don't jab! If you hit my backbone you'll find it's a third rail! ' "

" Well, Staton hasn't told me and he is usually very frank," the Governor admitted; " and in a time like this I'll not bother him with details."

" Now, that constabulary," pursued the reportorial mind. " Isn't it pretty ticklish having two hundred armed natives who have only had a few months' drill right in the heart of this town, when the garrison is so small and the enemy is getting all around us? "

" It's an experiment. To disarm them, as some timid ones say we ought, is to fly in the face of our policy. I'll not do that! " explained the Governor, decidedly; for this prod had reached his backbone. .

" Here, Big, this is your busy day. I'm only a tourist. The wonder is you don't throw me out." And Willy went to see the officers of the constabulary, for he had an idea that some of the forthcoming explosions would come from this quarter.

But no guest was ever more welcome to a pre-occupied host than Willy, and from Willy in an unexpected way he had another warning, which he needed, he assured himself, to re-inter an old hope reborn which he had been nourishing. It happened that he and Willy were looking out of the office at Clancy and Ellen, who had just departed after tiffin at the Palace.

“ There’s a pair! ” said Willy. “ A pair of an age, of a spirit alike! Anybody can see that he is completely gone. ”

They watched a pantomime in which Clancy was evidently asking to carry her parasol, while she was refusing.

“ He wins! ” said Willy.

She gave Clancy the parasol, whereon he began to walk backwards springily on his tiptoes, with the graces and genuflections of a spellbound minion of royalty.

“ Now she’ll make him stop that. I wonder how! ” Willy was all interest, of course.

Ellen took hold of the handle. Argument ensued. A compromise was effected and they walked on together, with Clancy behaving himself.

“ It will be a match, and so it ought, ” said Willy. “ Funny neither of us ever fell in love, Big. But this romance business isn’t for us. I’ve been too busy with the paper and you with the law and the light, and we’re too old for it, now. We’re bachelors for good, and when we arrive at our allotted threescore and ten may we be as mellow as Uncle Theodore and find solace in ‘ Araminta’s Hope. ’ But we don’t need to be that old not to want any young hearts broken, especially such glad hearts as Ellen’s and Clancy’s. ”

“ What a talker you are, Willy, bless you! Yes, we are meant for bachelors, no doubt, ” said the Big Fellow; and seated himself for the afternoon grind.

It was the next evening, unusually hot and sultry, with the bands closing in and the news not of the best, that word came of a little combat up the river between the *Paktowan* and the insurgents. So near was it that the rattle of the Colt's had been audible at the Palace.

This was the one thing the Governor did not want to happen and against which he had repeatedly cautioned the Lord High Admiral. Yes, Clancy was a trifle too quick, as he and the General agreed at dinner, and accordingly they sent for him.

Mrs. Staton and Ellen were sitting on the steps, while the General and the Governor were going over some reports, the General insistent that he must have a free hand to strike hard at the right moment, without any delay for diplomacy, when Clancy came, with his light step, his face aglow, pleased with the way his men had borne themselves in that brief exchange of shots which put forty insurgents to flight.

"Hello, Ellen!" He spoke to her first. "Good-evening, Mrs. Staton. Good-evening, Governor. General, you ought to have seen 'em skedaddle! Governor, you sent for me?"

It was exasperating to the Governor that Clancy was triumphant, as if he had done something creditable rather than something plainly in disobedience of orders; and the Governor was pretty tired that evening. The drag of the climate would not allow him to recover his strength. Such errors as this of the Lord High Admiral's

were dashing his hopes of a peaceful outcome of the crisis.

“Clancy,” he said, rather impatiently, “I’m afraid if you are going to make mischief of this kind you will not be of much assistance in this crisis.”

The Lord High Admiral turned white with anger, which he must suppress, for in the navy you may not talk back to your superiors.

“Yes, sir,” he said.

He saluted the General, and said good-night to Mrs. Staton and “Good-night, Ellen,” lingering a little on the last word, and started away, still with the light step and head high, thinking that he was repudiated, that he would miss the coming fight and that he might lose his beloved *Paktowan* and be sent to do watch duty on some third-rate cruiser. Yes, he would report back to the Admiral immediately, he told himself, in his rage. But, in that event, as he suddenly realized, he might not see Bar or Ellen again. So he took the barracks side of the square in going. He would say his farewells to the officers and wait on the Statons’ porch until Ellen returned home.

She had looked after him and then up at the Governor uncomprehendingly, in the silence that followed his departure.

“Big!” she said. “You, of all men, to sentence Clancy without trial, without listening, as if you were some old martinet of a colonel!”

He knew that he was convicted.

“This was the time you played Portia, Two

raids," he returned. "I am ashamed of myself." And he sent a servant to ask Clancy to return.

"After all he has done so cheerfully, day and night," she continued, "to send him away when the big fight is coming! Didn't you know that they fired on him? Didn't you know he had been wounded?"

"No! Was he? Well, I am a brute! And he rescued you, Two Braids. I even forgot that. I must be losing all sense of gratitude."

He rose and ran down the steps to meet Clancy, who came back light of step and head high, ready for anything.

"Governors get tired and peevish like other people," Big said. "Which arm is it?"

But he could see for himself. Though Clancy had put on a fresh blouse, a small red spot showed through his left sleeve from the soaked bandage.

"Tired, but not peevish—never!" rejoined the Lord High Admiral. "I'm used to worse than that from the sundowners we suffer in the navy; but it did hurt from you, uncommonly. I've tried to be so careful, too, knowing what a temptation Colt's is. I only went after some information, and when we got a blast I did return fire."

"Always do that," said the Governor. "What for the navy for? It isn't a traveling target. We're going to keep you and the Pakky with us to enjoy the blessings of peace."

Clancy made one of the group and merrily

described the "terrible conflict of Mango Bend," as he laughingly called it.

"But now I'm not going to do what we did the other night," Ellen told him, as they started to go. "You saw me home and then you said, 'Let's walk back to the *Paktowan*,' and then you had to see me home again—and there'd be no end to it! Good-night, Big! You'll win. We'll bag them all yet, without any killing."

She did have that last kindly word for him, the Big Fellow thought.

XLI

THE FIGHT

PARDO was the worst of the insurgent leaders, combining in a strong type all the fiercest and most cunning traits of the Tongals. A brigand, of brigands born, and young, this Robin Hood without a Robin Hood's chivalry would have in his band no one who had known the softening life of industry. His choice of principles was a choice of villages to plunder; his choice of occupation a career of magic prowess. The natives told stories of bullets fired point-blank at him that failed to kill. He boasted of a charmed life and of a priest's finger for a talisman. Bravery and will, besides, he had and discipline over his men.

Although Campo, the insurgent commander-in-chief, had never been able to control Pardo, Cortina won his coöperation by promising him the loot of the capital. On a momentous afternoon in this chronicle his band drove Staton's outpost off the round hill on the shore to the east of Takar, scarcely more than two miles from the outskirts of the town. Staton had meant to evacuate this hill as part of a plan to give the bands confidence and draw them in; but he was not pleased to find so

ardent an enemy as Pardo in occupation in such numbers.

There would be hot work on the morrow, as everybody knew; and yet no one had any doubt of the safety of the capital. The measure of success and the amount of life it would cost were the only questions, unless the constabulary should prove disloyal. No one of their officers thought they would, least of all their Captain; yet, no one was certain. Stubbornly the Big Fellow believed in his constabs; stubbornly he held to his hope that the crisis could be settled by diplomacy.

“When you are ready to strike,” he had kept telling the General, “we will send a white flag and I will talk to Cortina and Campo and all the leaders.”

The General nodded and said they must wait on events. He had no idea that the interview would ever be possible.

“There is your chance,” said the Governor, in an impulse of great elation as soon as he heard that it was Pardo’s men who had occupied Round Hill. “Take the hill with the constabulary!”

“You mean this in all seriousness?” Staton asked.

“I do!” he answered, thinking of his policy as he always was. “No native troops could have a fairer test. They are not asked to go against natives who fight for patriotism or independence, as they understand it. We send them to the work for which they are intended as the future police of the country. There is not a man among them

whose family or whose relatives, as I know, at some time or other have not felt the hand of Pardo."

"Yes, but to put them in a charge when they have never had their baptism of fire, when they believe Pardo invulnerable! That's no way to do with green troops, Governor," the General demurred.

"The best way with these! Let them win and they win for their own people, for law and order and the protection of property. The natives themselves with their own arms will have beaten the thief and murderer with the charmed life. They will have smashed the fetich."

"It does separate the wolves from the sheep, Governor, you are right. I begin to think you have more nerve than I. You would send them with no white troops for stiffening?"

"Yes, only their officers."

And Staton, surveying the immovable, towering Big Fellow, thought that he had not really understood him until that moment.

"This is in my department, you know," he reminded the Governor, with a straightening of the shoulders and drawing in of his brows, as if he had caught himself being borne to the wall by a stronger man.

"I know it is," was the rejoinder. "I make a suggestion and give my reasons, which I think are good."

Staton thought that the Governor was sitting closer to him, though he had not moved, and all

the time they had been looking into each other's eyes unflinchingly.

"I will do this on one condition," he concluded. "But, first, do you realize that Smith and his men will go against superior numbers intrenched?"

"Yes. All right. So much the better if they win."

"On one condition: If they do not get the hill with the first charge at daylight, you are not to expect any palaver business, for then I cannot afford to lose a single minute. If the constabs win, we'll try the white flag."

"Very good. I'll take the risk, Staton," the Governor answered, pleasantly. "That's a bargain."

It was great news, this, for the quick Clancy. He was going with the *Paktowan*, under cover of the darkness, to a bayou which he had sounded and surveyed long ago in his foreseeing way, "for you can never tell when there might be a 'scrap' and then there wouldn't be any time to explore," as he said. It was great news to the late Sergeant Smith, who said his "brown boys would go to it like chickens after corn." Ellen, who knew a little of the native language, went among the men and encouraged them.

"You'll show the world that Pardo does not lead a charmed life," was the cheering word of the Charming Lady.

That was the burden of W. W.'s talk, the chaplain's, and Willy Sweetser's; of the Governor's and the General's when, at midnight, the con-

stabulary were drawn up in front of their barracks before they marched out with the career of big Jim Harden of '88 in their keeping and with the words of His Bigness and the impression of his strength in their minds.

"Yes, I'll let you have a rifle, Mr. Sweetser, but don't you fire until the others fire. If you should—if you should——" Captain Smith did not say what he would do to the owner of *The Sentinel* building, but from his aspect he must have had something pretty savage in mind.

"No, sir, I'll not!" said Willy, boyishly, saluting with mock gravity.

"And no talking and no noise," Smith cautioned. "The chaplain and W. W. there know how to do this jungle-creep act and can look out for themselves,"—for, of course, both were along,—"but I'll keep you near me."

"Yes, sir, I want to be perfectly correct," Willy affirmed, "and I'll do just what you do, even to falling over a log, stubbing my toe, swearing, or getting drowned."

"You'll pass, I guess," Smith concluded, "and, between you and me, if we pull this off I'll be the happiest doughboy that ever kneaded the mud. They're mine, the brown faces, and it's me that's drilled and coaxed and damned 'em and sat up nights with 'em and blistered my nose by day for 'em, swelling my liver and sweating off my flesh, and now I'm to see whether they're mush or men."

Doubt existed even in Smith's mind, though.

he bore himself with a josslike confidence that would have made him a good manager of a political campaign. It was a gamble in psychology, a cry to Fate, taking these two hundred untried Tongals through the underbrush, where each man had to find his own way, with only their white officers to steady them and the chaplain and W. W., who counted for much, and Willy, burning with curiosity to know how it would feel to be shot at. That young American mining engineer, Thompson, and the young Australian, Horswell, of course were along. You could no more have kept them out of it than you could Willy. But Parkowitz was not coming. He had an engagement with a sentry who sat outside his door.

There is something else that ought to be told before the tale proceeds any further. After the Governor and the General had watched the constables march away, the Governor said, in that quiet manner in which men of the northern races may speak on a life-and-death occasion:

“ I don’t think I can keep out.”

“ Nor I,” was the answer. “ I’ll call at the Palace about three. Shall I? ”

“ Very good.”

That was all for the present.

At two o’clock Willy, who had been crawling along a mucky stream-bed, was up on the bank beside Smith, and in the faint moonlight they could see the hill’s outline. They were wet to

the skin, with hands and faces cut by the thorns. But Willy is the one to tell this story. It was his first experience under fire, and no battle in after years ever equals a man's first skirmish.

“ This glory business is like most other businesses,” he said. “ The fellows who work win. I used to think you marched out and deployed and the band played and you cheered and everybody on both sides struck an attitude, had their pictures taken, cheered and then charged, waving the flag, and then cheered some more. I was about as much onto the game as a spring poet is onto running a newspaper.

“ Why, we went at it like a lot of house-breakers and second-story climbers. We knew they kept the bulldog in the kitchen and the man of the family was in the second floor back over the dining-room, where the silver was, and he was a light sleeper. There wasn't any moving-picture heroics in doing a mile or more on your belly among thorns, snakes, and lizards and taking care not to make the snakes hurry away too fast for fear of waking the dog. And Smith was playing in this underhand way—Smith who would not play a foul to beat a man at any game! But war isn't a sport.

“ You couldn't hold any conversation or swear when thorns cut. Wet? You try working your way through dewy grass. It's the first time I ever knew you could keep on getting wet through after you were wet through.

“ When we got up on that bank and Smith

stopped and I stopped, we couldn't see more than four or five men around us. How'd we know whether anybody else was along? I wanted to ask a million questions, more or less, and couldn't ask one. My whole business in life was to keep still. Lie on a cold sponge for a while on a hot day and you'll know how I felt on that moist ground. Can the tropics be cold? There's nothing mean the tropics can't be.

“ For the first time in years I wanted cigarettes by the box. Now I know why soldiers would rather go hungry than without tobacco. I did have a cigar and I was about to light it when it occurred to me that Smith would kill me if I struck a light—and the matches were wet, anyway.

“ ‘ This is a pretty poor country for a low-gearred French machine,’ I thought, to be cheerful, and found I'd said it aloud and Smith punched me.

“ I wondered what I would do when the bullets began coming. Would I run? Would I yell? What about these manikins of the constab? Were they as hungry as I was? Were they as shivery? It's all right charging when the band is playing and you feel gay; but with their legs stiff from cold, would they just rush up that hill on empty stomachs for the pleasure of being shot at?

“ Then I remember—and you can tell only what you remember—Smith said, aloud, ‘ Now we shan't be long! ’ They say that's been said thousands of times on such mornings. Now we shan't

be long till we know which of us is to be killed! Some men say it with a laugh, some solemnly, some cynically, and I could see for myself that we shouldn't be so very long. The equator had pulled up the curtain of night as if the spring roller had flown out of hand. That tropical sun rises like the clang of cymbals.

“ My recollection of the first thing I saw was the dewdrops frosting my rifle barrel which lay beside me. Then I noticed that all the hemp in the clearing had been cut. Pardo had done that in the early evening so as to have a free field of fire at us when we charged. It was pretty clever of him, but I didn't admire that kind of cleverness much at the time.

“ Then, boom! a three-pounder came from over to the left, followed by a sound like tearing canvas—the Colt's automatic with its spatter of bullets! Yes, there she was, the *Paktowan*! What do you think that quick Clancy had done? He'd pushed her in overnight through the bushes right up to within fifty yards of Pardo's trench! As he swung that rapid-fire gun back and forth, the way he was spraying the heads of the peonies on top of that trench was beautiful. Never anything looked so good to me as she did.

“ Next I knew I had troubles of my own. Zip—something went by! Zip—something else went by! And what did I do? Oh, I must have been funny! I put up my hands to stop them, as though they were hornets. Bullets, I thought, of course! like recalling in a flash the name to

go with the face of a man I had passed in the street.

“ There was Smith right alongside me, lean as a hound, with his thin, peaked, tanned face and high cheekbones and sharp nose. But he was standing and all the other officers were, and looking at that hill like they had photographers’ rods down their backs to hold them in position.

“ I got up on my knee, though I didn’t particularly want to, but I was an American and I wasn’t going to be out of style, anyway. Then we began firing. I looked along the line and there they were—all the constabs in position just on the edge of the hemp field. How’d they ever got there? I tell you I admired Smith and Staton for that. They had mapped and scouted and mapped and scouted, and Smith had been putting that bunch through every bit of jungle in the neighborhood at night to get them bush-wise. Talk about your glory business—it’s work that counts!

“ Suddenly I realized I had a rifle and I wanted to fire, and I dropped down and it’s funny how cool I was. I just kept plugging away at heads on the top of the trench, like an honest man trying to make a good score, till the bugle sounded ‘Cease!’ Then I got back on the job as a reporter.

“ I looked along the line again and saw Big and Staton were with us, both standing like the officers, making altogether a line of ribs of white men back of the constabs. The Governor ought not to have been there. The General oughtn’t.

They knew they oughtn't, and they were ashamed of themselves for their dereliction of duty afterward. What if they should be killed? Who was going to run things then? I was crazy mad and started toward old Big, calling to him to lie down, and then I heard him speak, just as the Colt's stopped its music in a way that made you think someone at the gun had been struck.

“ ‘ Get in! ’ Big said. ‘ They’re putting all their fire on to Clancy! ’

“ ‘ Get in! ’ said the General, and his sandstone face was fine. It was smiling—just smiling. So was Big’s. That pair had a look that would make a rainbow think it could pierce armor.

“ ‘ Get in! ’ said Smith.

“ They all had the same thought at once. The bugle sounded the charge. It was then I found out that up to that minute I had been a slow old, two-mile-an-hour thinker. I became an express. Maybe I would be killed! Would I ever dine at Jerry’s again? And if I was killed, what would my old father in his country pastorate do with *The Sentinel*? Circulation wouldn’t boom much, I knew.

“ Yes, I gave the three-hundredth part of a second to that, but it was as clear as if I had been doping it out for a week on a typewriter. I moved, too, while I thought. I didn’t propose to be left behind. Now don’t think I’m brave. ’Twasn’t that. It was like boys scrambling for a nickel. But if I’d been told Smith’s plan before, I’d have gone all of a shiver.

“ He wasn’t going to urge the natives in. He was going to lead them. He and his officers had stood up to show the constabs that there was no reason in being afraid of Pardo. Now they were going to show the constabs how easy it was to lick him. It was their talisman against Pardo’s talisman. Do you see that?

“ Well, we sprang ahead of the line. And what if the constabs didn’t follow? Big, Staton, the chaplain, W. W., Thompson, Horswell, Smith and his six officers, and yours truly were going into that trench alone. As we rose I heard the men calling, ‘ For the Governor! For Bar!’ That was the only thing that was like the war I’d been brought up on in the story-books. It was so unreal I felt like blue-penciling it. And what gave us all heart just as we started was the *Paktowan’s* hose breaking loose again to keep some of the bullets off us. Clancy was at the Colt’s himself that time—as we learned afterward.

“ Henceforth, I’ll believe every man that says he was the first up San Juan Hill. Let the Society of the First flourish, say I. They’re all entitled to membership. I was the first up Round Hill. So were all the others. How could I help being? Wasn’t I running five times as fast as I ever ran before and arriving with my head and eyes before my feet did? Why, skidding down an incline toward a river embankment when the brakes don’t work is just a dash of cologne water from the atomizer to this high dive of doing two hundred yards over slippery hemp leaves to get

after that fellow in the trench who's trying to kill you—and I guess they would have killed most of us if it hadn't been for the *Paktowan*.

“ But you did glance away from the front to the right and left to see if anybody was beating you into that trench and you glanced back, with your heart palpitating somewhere near the top of your head, to see if the constabs had stopped, knowing you had to go on, anyway, and you could not retreat, and your heart settled back into place a-singing as you saw that they were coming. They couldn't do it quite right, of course. They were bunching around the Governor and the General, and I guess that was a good thing, because it was just like old Big to come out without any revolver and to have to snatch a rifle from one of the gugus before he had anything to fight with.

“ Father Tim was bareheaded, with the sun on his white forehead, and looking like he was saying: ‘ The water's fine! Come on in! ’ And W. W.—well, he's in the Society of the First up Round Hill if anyone is. His legs were making wonderful time, for they hadn't so much to carry, and his lips were moving and his eyes bright, and I guess he was singing a hymn of praise about the valiant soldiers of the Word, or something like that.

“ I had them in a lightning flash, the kind of flash that chisels out little details that you always remember, and the last impression out of the corner of my eye, as I turned my head, was that W. W. threw up his hands at the same time that some-

thing went by my ear so close it whistled. That little man with the rifle in the trench right in front of me was going to be mine or I his in a second. That's the way you feel. There's no courage in it. It's just self-preservation. He probably would have hit me if Clancy's spray of death hadn't made him so nervous.

"I could see the Colt's bullets cutting the earth around him—and then I did have a jolt. It was as if a man who had saved your life was about to take it. Would Clancy be killing his own folks? No! The hose was turned off at the right moment, and there I was on top of that brown devil in the trench. He wasn't the only one. I was as busy as a man throwing non-breakables out of a burning house, till suddenly I looked into Smith's face, which was grinning.

" 'They went to it like chickens after corn!' he said."

The ruck of killing was over; the victory was won. A dark-skinned little man in red breeches with a General's straps lay among a pile of the bodies of his band, many torn by the three-pounder's shells, his red cap at his side and his horrible talisman still hanging by a string to his neck. It was a cruel face, and the faces around it were cruel. Already a company of regulars was marching around the inner edge of the hill to play their part in Staton's plan. Father Tim was patting the constabs on the shoulders. In their elation and wonder at what they had done, they were

staring at that magical brigand for whose invulnerability a single bullet had sufficed.

What price their leaders had paid to teach them the lesson of confidence and courage which they would not forget, Smith, in the midst of the rejoicing, was the first to see. He touched Father Tim's arm and, unable to speak, pointed to a small figure in civilian khaki only a few yards from the trench. Some of the tracts had fallen out of W. W.'s bag by his side and his face, gentle, wistful, as it had been on the trail when he asked if he didn't do the boys a little good, was upturned toward them. His message had come mercifully quick. He lay quite still where he had fallen.

"No old knight of the cross ever fought a better or happier fight than he," said Father Tim, his blue eyes hazy with tears as he bent over W. W. in the common sympathy of the Word by whomsoever taught.

Those who had won now thought of what other sacrifices had been made that day in Miss Destiny's service and scanned the forms on the hillside. Two officers of the constabulary had fallen and a score of privates. No young officer, no sailors had rushed up from the *Paktowan* to see the effect of the shells or to rejoice with the victors.

With fires banked and the men poling the little gunboat had been driven under cover of the bushes into the shallow water, where she was left grounded by the outflowing tide. The honor

of the navy in that engagement was in our Lord High Admiral's keeping, and well placed. As they lashed ship to ship in the old days, so he had lashed the *Paktowan*, which could not retreat, alongside that trench, with his ten rifles and his three-pounders and his Colt's.

That quick eye of Willy's caught a message of melancholy from the movement of the figures aboard before he saw one of them put the flag at half-mast. He gave up all idea of overtaking Big for the palaver with the enemy, which he now knew must follow the fight, and started toward the *Paktowan* to hear the news that he had instinctively guessed, while the Governor and the General, who had hurried to their horses at the foot of the hill, were riding back to town.

XLII

WITHOUT KILLING

BUT the real victory was yet to be won. If the fight had to go on, then the Big Fellow was beaten. His hopes went with the white flag which a mounted orderly carried by the main road into the interior toward the insurgent lines, while he and Staton waited on the outskirts of the town.

“The news of the annihilation of Pardo and his gang will travel fast. That ought to be convincing,” said Staton.

Directly, having a soldier for company, Parkowitz appeared, his head down, tugging at his moustache and answering their nods with a nod; and this led the Big Fellow to look at Staton questioningly.

“I think Parkowitz may also be convincing,” the General told him.

“Yes, I may be of a little service, Governor,” Parkowitz explained, glumly, with an effort to ingratiate himself.

“We will welcome anything—anything to get peace without any more killing,” the Governor assured him.

The orderly, who had disappeared around a

bend in the road, returned shortly with a young Tongal officer in bright red trousers and bearing himself with a pronouncedly military air.

“General Cortina and General Campo send word that if the garrison will surrender at once,” he said, saluting most stiffly in Spanish style, “it will not be held as prisoners of war; and they say they will be very glad to talk over details with you.”

“Very good!” said the Governor, smiling.

The young officer and the orderly led the way and Staton and the Governor rode together, with Parkowitz following. As they saw Cortina and Campo approaching, Staton said:

“You’ll do all the talking, Governor, I take it, and call on me for any information, if there is any you haven’t—and I doubt if there is.”

“Yes, I will do the talking, by all means,” the Governor answered.

Cortina himself was in red trousers, with a Lieutenant-General’s stars; for promotion was easy in the Tongal army. He had grown more emaciated; his lips seemed to be drawn tighter across his protruding teeth; his skin was yellower than when he had bidden his lying adieu to the Governor.

“Your health is quite restored, Excellency,” he said. “And I understand, Excellency, you seek our terms,” he proceeded boldly, almost patronizingly.

“Yes,” said Campo, following the lead of The Thinker.

Campo was a full-blooded, rather youthful-looking Tongal, who, like Pardo, had the reputation of being invulnerable. His success in massacring the twenty men at Bakan had left him undisputed head of the insurgents. Though gifted in playing on the superstitions of the people, he was ignorant and intellectually a tool in Cortina's hands.

"Yes, we will have a little talk together, doctor," said the Governor.

"You are quite at our mercy," Cortina pursued.

"Yes," added Campo.

Their manner aggravated Staton, who was glad that he was not to do the talking. He feared that he would have lost his temper. But the Big Fellow was in the best of humor.

With Parkowitz and his guard hovering in the background, the party seated themselves under the shade of a mango-tree.

"Why do you think that you have us at your mercy?" the Governor asked.

"We have you completely surrounded. We have six thousand rifles and you have only six hundred men," said Cortina, softly.

"You are right; we have only six hundred," answered the Governor.

The candor with which he stated the true number made Campo, at least, suspicious. He had seen a cruiser arrive in the harbor that morning. Had it brought reënforcements?

"Do you include Pardo in your six thousand?" Big asked.

“ He was nothing,” said Cortina. “ A brigand. We sent him out as a pawn, Excellency. We fooled you a little there.”

“ And fooled Pardo, too, but not our native constabulary. Smith’s two hundred makes us eight hundred. They were equal to five hundred of Pardo’s men.” Then the Governor, who knew that Campo also carried a dead man’s finger as a talisman, looked steadily at him and added: “ Pardo was not invulnerable, at all, our constabs found.”

“ Pardo is nothing,” said Campo, but looking at the ground.

“ Now, Staton,” continued the Governor, and Staton passed him a couple of maps. “ These make it quite clear, doctor.”

On the first which he spread out the movement of every one of the bands was traced from its starting-point, day by day, in a series of arrow-headed lines converging toward Takar.

“ Aw!” exclaimed Campo, in Oriental stolidity, none the less amazed that such accurate information should be in Staton’s hands.

“ General Staton draws beautifully,” said Cortina, satirically.

“ Yes, the General is a true artist at his work,” said the Governor, unfolding the second map.

Here the converging lines with arrow-heads were the garrisons which, with swift marches, had swung in behind the insurgents.

“ Aw!” breathed Campo. But he gave Cortina a look of hate. Campo was not altogether

a dreamer. He had some of the inherent military sense of any natural leader.

"Beautiful!" said Cortina, with an amused laugh. "Is that all, Excellency?" he asked, and at heart he wished for a mint to calm his nerves, for he could see for himself that it was not all.

A company of marines had come down the gangway of the cruiser at dawn just after it dropped anchor. Campo already knew the mettle of these soldiers of the ship. Marching out with the regulars, they formed on the right of the force of Don Francisco of Toll, that proud old Presidente, who now had three hundred rifles and a largely increased gang of road-workers. And thus, with all the exterior garrisons locking arms the insurgent half-circle lay between an outer half-circle and the force in the capital.

"Do you see?" asked the Governor, quietly, after the explanation.

"I see!" said Cortina, savagely. "I see, Excellency, but we have our rifles. We can fight and we will send a bill for killing home to America that will horrify your countrymen."

"Yes," added Campo. "We will kill many. We will slip through the brush under your soldiers' noses. Haven't we done it many times? Have we lost our cunning? We will return to the hills and fight you in the old way."

"No," answered the Governor. "Do you notice that all the natives have left their homes in the zone where your forces are? We have them in town. The name of everyone has been

taken and everyone has his passport. So, observe, that, whether he has hidden his rifle or not, every adult between our two lines without a passport is an enemy and so known."

"Very clear! My compliments, General Steel Fingers!" said Cortina to Staton.

"Aw!" added Campo, but more thoughtfully than stolidly.

"Now, every trail is commanded by our rifles," continued the Governor, pursuing his fatal logic, as he sought the eyes of either man in vain. "Whichever way you go you cannot dodge. You will have to go against American soldiers face to face."

"Face to face!" repeated Campo. This was not a thing his men would ever do, and as he tugged at the white gloves at his sword hilt, still trying to preserve his stolidity, the Governor saw that the problem was now only a matter of talk and time; but the General, to clinch the argument, called Parkowitz, who came forward.

"Cortina," said Parkowitz, with a grizzly effort to smile, as if he would make a joke of it, "the steel in that lot of two thousand rifles from Hongkong will not stand ten rounds and all the ammunition in the bottom layers had sawdust for powder. It was a cheap job."

Cortina thought that he understood this game. It was an intellectual pleasure to his type of mind to expose it.

"You speak the piece you are taught well, my old friend," he said.

"Well, you will see," Parkowitz returned, with a sneer, "when you try them."

The insurgents had not yet tried them, target practice not being their custom and ammunition too costly.

"That is all," the General told Parkowitz, with a nod. "It may be a little brutal, Governor, but when a foreigner who enjoys our protection sells arms to fight us I don't think so—and he's had his punishment."

"I may take the first steamer, now?" Parkowitz asked.

"Yes, oh, yes," answered Staton, casually.

"Good-day, Governor," Parkowitz said, and started down the road. Yes, he certainly had had his punishment.

"Face to face!" It was Campo who fairly shouted this, his features livid as he thought of trying to charge through that line of regulars. "No, Excellency, no!" he cried.

"Campo, you are nervous," said Cortina, soothingly. "But I do agree with you that we find the sport better with General Prairie Fire than with General Steel Fingers. Excellency," he added to the Governor, with a half smile, "will you grant us amnesty?"

"What do you think from what you know of our policy?" was the question in answer.

"Oh, that you will!"

Yes, Cortina knew this well enough, this American weakness, or he could not have kept up his chipperness. He had no wish to risk his life.

From the moment that he had seen the maps and looked from them to the unyielding faces of the Governor and the General, his mind was quite made up to use the money he had in the bank at Barcelona in enjoying the sunny places of Spain and Morocco for the rest of his days.

"We haven't six thousand rifles!" confessed Campo.

"Between three and four thousand. We shall get all you have," said the General, whose task it was now to arrange the details of the surrender with the commanders of the insurgents.

"You will excuse me, Campo," Cortina said, "but you are the military man. I cannot help you in this, so I'll not wait. I am very thirsty for a mint and homesick for my veranda."

"You are a snake!" Campo told him, fiercely.

"How foolish to call names!" answered The Thinker.

Cortina, trying to renew his old associations with a gracious phrase or two, would even ride back to town at the Governor's side. But the Governor's horse was faster than his.

Big had not been as happy since that day in court when Willy won his suit against John Byng. To-morrow he would begin a new order of things! To-morrow Washington should have word of nearly four thousand rifles taken and the skeptics among the kill-alls would hear how Smith's constabs had stood their baptism of fire! He had won and won without killing!

Such were his thoughts before in the plaza he

ard the news of how one of the small circle of
rkers in Bar had fallen unbeknown to him,
ough only a few feet from his side, and his joy
came ashes. W. W.'s body had been brought
from the hill, and the chaplain on one side and
e Governor on the other side of the litter,
rich was set on the marble floor of the cathedral,
und themselves silent. After a time, Father
m, who knew the thousand books even as W. W.
ew them, said in the fulness of a great, human,
ristian moment:

“The work goes on, Governor, nevertheless!”

“The work goes on, Father Tim. For that he
red and for that he died,” said the Big Fellow.

In coming out of the cathedral he met Ellen,
r head bare, regardless of the sun. Although
e had heard that he was safe, the sight of him
ove a dread out of her mind. She came quite
ar him, filling her eyes with the wealth of his
ight and strength.

“They didn’t hit you, did they, Big?” she
ked. “I was frantic when I heard what you
id done.”

“They were our constabs; we had to encourage
em,” he answered.

“Oh, is it worth the price?” she demanded,
rnestly, looking in at the door, where the chap-
in, a huddled figure with grey lines for lips and
l the merriment out of his blue eyes, still sat be-
de the litter.

“I sometimes ask myself that,” he said; “but
W. never did.”

Then they saw coming around a street corner into the plaza four young sailors of the *Paktowan*, with a ripped sleeve flapping about a bandaged arm, bearing another litter. Willy Sweetser, an outsider who would not question that the right was theirs to carry their commander, walked beside them.

“It’s Clancy!” Ellen said, with a cry.

One need make no conventional inquiry; one knew the truth without experience of battles by the look of that still figure. The message had come to Clancy as it had to W. W., mercifully quick, making a tiny hole in his forehead; that was all. The face was smiling as if enjoying victory.

“After two men were down and he took the Colt’s himself as we charged, and had just stopped firing as he saw that we were reaching the trench—not a shot too many or too few—the last bullet from the trench got him!” said Willy, in a broken, angry voice.

After the sailors bore the litter into the tinted light of the cool nave, Ellen, the Governor and Willy, standing in the doorway, saw the chaplain spring forward and clasp Clancy’s hands in his and hold them as if he would, by some miracle, bring him back to life.

“Ellen,” said Willy, impulsively, and he regretted his impulse too late, “this was in his pocket.”

It was her own photograph that he gave her. She took it from him mechanically. Then she

ed up at Big with a glazed appeal in her eyes uttered a stifled moan.

I—I didn't know this! " she exclaimed to him

or a second she seemed to see nothing except blaze of light and the sky, and the photograph from her fingers. As Big picked it up ab-ctedly, he was groping for some word to ease grief. To him the steps of Mrs. Staton, who approaching, seemed leaden. He welcomed coming to ease a situation in which he was less, and with the great load of the debt he d Clancy on his heart, he went to the Palace end that cable which was to have been one of mph.

o one of those present will ever try to repeat few words he said in the afternoon over the graves on the hillside. They say it is impos-e. They say he simply poured out his heart. the two men, so different of schooling and of ight, whom Bar had lost would have been the to approve of any bitterness.

ad W. W. been told the night before the fight t would happen he would have said: " Why, n ready. How could I preach the Word if I en't? "

ad Clancy been told, he would have said, smil- : " Why, that's in my game, but it's not in rs, W. W. Mind you keep under cover till the ig is over."

he could look down from " up there "—rever it is—W. W. might see the thoughtful

faces of hundreds of soldiers who were better men for having known him and he might hear of some halting priest of the Word who had found strength and fortitude in this example of how the sneers of some cynic or unbeliever like Parkowitz were stilled.

If the Lord High Admiral of the *Paktowan* could look down, he might see on white ships in many seas where they toast the navy—the quick navy—young officers thinking quietly that they must live up to the standard set by the quick Clancy, sunny traveler, making love to many girls innocently, without guile; and he might see sun-downers, after they had blinked and cleared their throats, warming to kinder words and more generous views, and hear old Admirals, in their corners of retirement, saying: “Lashed her to the trench, did he?” and quoting what the Personality said when he heard of the incident.

That scene in the little American cemetery was one of many of its kind which are cut fine, clear, and terrible in the memory. “The honors of a military funeral” is the expression of the press dispatches. With the splendor of the sun’s setting bronzing the foliage and bathing his forehead, Father Tim read the service. Then crash spoke the volley of the Krags, the soldiers swung into line with veteran stride, and a fighting-man’s last tribute to the fighting dead was over.

The Governor and Ellen led the way for the silent company. Not until they were in the streets of the town did either speak.

"Oh, Big, I keep thinking what if you, too, had been——" and she did not finish the sentence.

He looked at her, startled, and she looked at the ground.

"It's the chance and one keeps right on, not thinking of that," he rejoined.

"Though I'm so bitter at what it cost, I'm very proud, Big, of the way you've done it—and you saw ahead and you were right!" she said. "Oh, I don't believe in killing any more than you do."

The return for the price that had been paid one might witness in the plaza. Big and Ellen joined the General, who stood watching the insurgent bands stack their rifles and file past. With their ammunition belts some had thrown down those talismans which, in their superstition, they had hoped would make them invulnerable. Among these was a newspaper photograph of a facile orator with a mobile mouth, which had been pasted on a piece of cardboard.

"We might send that over to Cortina," said Smith, of the constabulary.

XLIII

HARVEST

WHEN Ellen and Big parted at Staton's door he gave her the photograph that had been found in Clancy's pocket. After she reached her room she looked at it again, and a peeling edge discovered to her the fact that underneath was another photograph. Her own had been stripped off its board and pasted on that of Clem, and over Clem's face was a newspaper notice of the recent marriage of Miss Clementine Underhill to one Mr. George Boyson.

One who knew Clancy well, the quick-Clancy, sailor and sentimentalist, could guess his mood when he wrote underneath the notice in his round, boyish hand: "I know a truer girl than you;" and covered the untrue with the true. But he had never mentioned his love to Ellen. How could he, he may have thought, when his comradeship with her had been begun on a basis of loyalty to Clem?

As she put both photographs away together, without knowing why she did so or what she would ever do with them, she recalled in vivid detail how Clancy had secured her portrait. Confessing himself a robber bold, he had seized it

from Mrs. Staton's drawing-room table and fled in triumph, to return later with irresistibly good-humored prayers for pardon.

The scene out of the window, where the General stood a stiff, sober profile in the evening light, watching the insurgents file by, reminded her that the first great chapter in Bar was closed. Did she care to begin a new one when her term of service was up and it was her privilege to return to the States on a vacation or for good, as she chose? The island could not be the same to her again. Her old circle of friendships was broken. Her relations with Big seemed to have changed beyond the possibility of any working arrangement.

"I'll go home by the first steamer," she decided.

As she started to make preparations to occupy her mind by looking over this thing and that before packing, she picked up her account book, to which she had been faithful even if she did not know "math." She had saved a sum almost equal to her debt. Suddenly she thought that she would not pay him back. It would hurt Big. It would be unfair and cruel. No, she would spend her money on something for the old house in Bolton to please Aunt Julia and Madame Mother.

All her foreign and native friends, including Don Francisco, a field marshal of polite phrases, were at the landing to wish the Charming Lady a happy voyage, while the children of Exhibit A, who now could spell such whoppers as "fran-

chise " and " electoral," sang the Red, White, and Blue, with a verse composed in haste especially for the occasion by Kiddy Witherbee. It was " Good-bye, Two Braids! " and " Good-bye, Big! " between her and the Governor. This remained their working arrangement, if any were needed when they were to be apart. She was to take Madame Mother the story of how mind and character were winning.

Willy Sweetser departed soon afterward. Company after company of regulars merrily took the transports to the land of brown the wheats and oysters on the half shell. " Smith and his constabs can have the job; the United States is good enough for us," was the burden of their refrain.

Peace having been won, the building of the structure which must have peace as its base could begin. All the captured insurgents were sent back to their homes. The fangs of the lawless were largely drawn; the industrious returned to industry. Ever traveling, the Governor met the folks of the towns and villages. He sat with them at their feasts and in their councils. He was patient with their complaints and elemental in his expositions. They tried the municipal elections and sometimes stumbled sadly; but he helped them up again and started them afresh. The schools flourished, native teachers were being trained to assist the white teachers, while a growing fever for baseball spread through the island.

" I think baseball is the truest friend of the

propaganda," said the old Presidente of Toll. "If the players learn not to use the bat on the umpire, is it not proven that they have the true instinct of the constitutional rights of the minority?"

Although Don Francisco, "that original Harden man," did say that the Big Fellow was pretty young to be sponsor of so large a family, the people were beginning to call him "The Father of the Tongals," which he liked better than His Bigness or His Excellency. To those who were going too fast, who would run before they could walk, he had to speak in warning as well as instruction. They had first to creep, first to learn the rudiments of self-government, as he kept explaining.

An old white-haired bishop from America surprised the parishes with the good tidings that there were more of the same kind of men in the land that produced young Father Tim. Prosperity was also promised with peace. Horswell was doing well as Parkowitz's successor and Thompson would soon begin shipping coal from his mine.

With details of the great change that had come to this people one might go on indefinitely. The Big Fellow had won his greatest fight; unarmed he might ride across his island. Was it only his personality that had wrought success with the abc idea at which the clerk from Tooting had scoffed? Or had he implanted a principle that would grow in the native mind? It was the man

and the idea together; for good ideas need good men to make them come true.

And now in the spring of the year following the autumn in which Ellen had gone, he himself was to have his vacation, and to see his own country for which his eyes were hungry. A Governor from a neighboring island could carry on the work in the Big Fellow's absence; and he was making his preparations for departure when he received a message from Bolton, twelve months' old, which concerns our story more intimately than Bar, at this stage.

Our postal service played strange tricks in those early days. The humid heat of the rainy season made the ink run and melted the gum that held envelopes together. This letter, signed only "Mother," had been twice across the Pacific and finally to the Dead Letter office, where "Harden" and "Bar" were deciphered.

"I have been meaning to write you of this ever since I heard that Ellen was going," she said, "and I have delayed, thinking that being thrown together on the island you would both find yourselves if there were anything to find. Besides, I knew that when I was young like Ellen and had some of her spirit, I hope, I should not have liked to have any man's mother tell him that I was in love with him.

"I must be getting pretty old and out of the way of understanding girls, or I would have thought before of what occurs to me now. If such a thing, some little, ungovernable thing, in the

back of her head, which we call love, did send Ellen to Bar, then once she had arrived she would be most careful to conceal it.

“ Long before the President asked you to go I half guessed that Ellen loved you. Frequently I was certain of it. Again, she was so young, so impressionable, that I doubted her fixity. That night when Julia admonished her, and too severely, I must say, after her ride with Ned Walker, it came over me in a flash, as I saw how you took her side and the way you looked at her—yes, it came over me then, as the cumulative result of other observations, probably, that you loved her.

“ I saw that you loved a woman for the first time with all the strength and faults of your big, boyish nature, and I saw it as I was about to tell Julia, that she had gone far enough and demand she retract what she had said.

“ Then I reasoned quickly, as women do. I said, my son's happiness is at stake. I concluded that love for such natures as yours and Ellen's must be a love that would endure. If it were of that kind, her going away that night would not destroy it and it would only grow the stronger. This separation could not keep you apart. Yes, I concluded that it would be a test for you both, and I did not interfere with Julia. I let Ellen go. You see, I did what I thought was best and that is all one can do. Now I think it is time for you to know.

“ Another thing which, perhaps, partly excuses me. I thought that in one of your great, winning

impulses you might not let Ellen leave the house unless she went with you, or that you would follow her and refuse to take no for an answer. But I fear you had the 'faint heart that never won fair lady,' as the poet says, and such frailty I never expected of you, Jimmy."

"Mine has endured! Mine has!" said Big, and his head went forward on his desk.

Had Ellen's endured? Was it ever there to endure? He saw Clancy's face through a mist and he saw hers as she stood under the cathedral arch when Willy gave her the photograph. But all would be settled in a short time. He would reach home as soon as the post; and that thing which the working arrangement had never allowed to have root in Bar he set aside as some waiting treasure in a box which he was to open.

The natives made the day of his departure a holiday in which to wish him a happy voyage and pray for his return. They had a *fiesta* and speech-making, and sent out a boat-load of flowers and a deputation headed by Don Francisco to the transport to make more speeches.

"Father of the Tongals and my good friend, you have been the rising sun to our Bar," said Don Francisco, magniloquently; "and though you go, unlike the sun when it sets your light still remains."

If Miss Destiny overheard this, as most likely she did, she must have given a backward glance of "Now, what have you to say about it?" to the folks out Plymouth Rock way.

Their answer would be ready, of course.

“Isn't he ours?” For they claim everything of which they approve.

“And mind, young woman, don't you make any more flying leaps till you consult us,” we hear them warning her.

“I would never have crossed the Mississippi,” we hear her tartly replying, “if I'd waited to talk it over with you!”

XLIV

THE HOME LAND

NOW the Governor and Kiddy knew the sweetness of sleep under blankets; they knew the glory of sunrises that wake you gently and of sunsets that say good-night gently in a season of twilight; and they knew the meaning of home to men who have loyally done the service they were sent to do in a strange land. A ceremonial day was that when they doffed their duck suits and out of their trunks came the temperate zone chrysalis.

“Boss, think of wearing a vest again!” said Kiddy. “Think of having a vest with four pockets! Let’s see—there was one for a pencil, one for a watch, one for an address book, and one for a dollar bill when I had a dollar bill. I guess I’ll learn to use them again, all right.”

The Golden Gate was all gold to them. They were entering the outpost port of the Occident to see their own world for the first time through a traveler’s eye, and through Benito’s, as far as they could draw the first disciple. For Benito was with them. Far Eastern destiny had attached him to the person of the Big Fellow for life.

“It is His Great Bigness’ country, where all things are big,” said the Guardian, with Oriental stoicism, as he stared at the immense buildings. “I see no men among all these tall men taller than he.”

The pleasure of outfitting him in European clothes they had anticipated all the way across the Pacific. He chose a sailor blue suit, a bright red tie, a pancake hat, and patent-leather shoes. After the first day in woolen underwear his unaccustomed skin protested.

“It makes me itch like the smallpox,” he told the Governor. “Yet, I will wear it and the new shoes, which are so beautiful, for I see in your country, Great Bigness, everyone wears the shoes.”

The cooler air put an edge to their appetites. They craved the substantials which were bringing the color back to their cheeks with the rush of fresh red blood in happy arteries, which sent out messages of cheer and plenty to every part of their systems.

“Oh, it is home, home, home!” Kiddy kept reiterating. “I used to think home was just my own town, and now I think it is anywhere in the United States. And I don’t know whether I like the oysters or the strawberries or the plums or the ripe olives best, after the steaks and the chops. I can feel the steaks giving me strength as I eat them”—and Kiddy’s chin was pretty peaked. “Think of getting these things all at once and being equal to all! It’s a good world, I tell you,

Boss. But I notice we aren't much on the rice and chicken and I shy every time I see the glint of a piece of tin. No more solder in my peas for the present, thank you, and we can eat all we want all the way on the train, can't we, Boss! "

Big took Kiddy's point of view that the best of voyages was that across their own continent, when local color flies by in landscapes hung between telegraph poles for a changing panorama of two thousand miles, without the interruption of a custom house.

Through California and the olive orchards, where all the coloring is rich with harmony, and up the slopes of the Sierras; across the desert glistening with the frost of the alkali; over the Rockies to the ranges where the cattle graze on the river bottoms; across the rolling levels bearded a fresher green with young wheat than the tropics know, where the farmhouses standing stark against the sky a few years before are now set among trees and the hand of man has made laughter of the desolation of the prairies which are one day to be as fair to the eye as the plains of Lombardy or the Lahn; across the Mississippi and on into the Middle West, with its parks of farmlands, with the fruit trees in blossom and the roof of more than one farmhouse covered with the petals of a favorite apple or pear tree, they traveled in May, in the wonder of scenes grown more familiar in their absence, in the joy of eyes dwelling on the oak and the maple again. Out of the windows they saw the wealth of the soil yielding

its abundance; in the cities they saw the wealth that energy had created in new buildings in progress and in the fresh earth turned for sidings and branch lines the promise of care for growing populations.

They scanned the faces at the stations, keen, eager, like the young nation they typified, in which ambition of the individual still runs high to do for himself, without relying on the government to do all for him; while in two or three places they had glimpses of red faces between black braids of hair, which, as Kiddy informed Benito, belonged to the first American families.

"Great Bigness, you are so very kind," quoth the Guardian, "to come from such a big country, where they shoot you out of big gun to big gun"—meaning the tunnels and the covered stations,—“and yet you do not come to the end, only to the big river! You are so very kind to be so patient with the Cortina and listen all day to the troubles of the barefoots of my countrymen.”

There was some truth in that. The traffic on the trails of Benito's island was pretty insignificant beside that of the far-stretching steel rails. A Governor of Bar might be mighty in Takar, but he was a vague unit in this great army of unceasing workers, each trying to conquer an individual world in the United States. Two years was a long time to have lost touch. Could he get back in step again? If he gave up his Bar, what, then, was he to do?

He laughed when he found that Kiddy had

saved a good portion of his salary, while he himself, spending so liberally in keeping open house for all the Presidentes, returned with less than he had when he left home, a trifling sum if we exclude his books. But money never had bothered him much. It meant only bed and food.

“ I’ll borrow from you, Kiddy,” he said.

“ Boss, I’ll lend you every cent I’ve got!” Kiddy returned, honestly.

“ I wonder whether we could earn our livings if we were to get off the train at the next station without any money in our pockets or any friends to fall back on,” Big suggested.

“ You bet we could!” was Kiddy’s view.

“ Yes, we could!” Big declared, confidently. He felt still young and strong enough to take his place as a two-dollar-a-day man, at least, in the mixed gang, and this was a source of more personal pride than his work in Bar.

Big was a true democrat and a born palaverer, no doubt. Everyone with whom he talked brought him some message, as we know. He was renewing his acquaintance with his own country through all the people he met on the train. Farmer, business man, professional man, miner, workman with whom he spoke saw a big, smiling fellow who seemed to enjoy the sight of every town and every glance out of the car window and who was settling back into home ways as easily as Kiddy into the use of his waistcoat pockets.

To them he did not have to talk the abc’s of that great thing which he had tried to implant in

the mind of a strange people in their behalf. All the elementals which had taxed his patience in their exposition were here a part of blood and instinct and made that common tie which held all together in a bond that distance or difference of climate or of occupation could not break. Yes, it was home, home, home; and he knew its value and all it stood for better than he ever had before.

When the train's flight at daybreak revealed the rolling country which was that part of the land that was his by birth and youthful associations, he saw this, too, with new eyes, as part of the great whole; and Kiddy, keen-eyed for it, made him slightly jealous by pointing out the tower of the new *Sentinel* building, which, you may be sure, was highly conspicuous over the roof tops; for wasn't *The Sentinel* Willy's paper?

As they came out on the car steps at the Union Station and Kiddy Witherbee sprang into the arms of a mother from the tenements, who had brought him up to "mind his business and his manners and keep on the job," the Big Fellow saw that he had not been forgotten. There were the faces of his friends looking into his with friendship's true welcome.

"H'lo, Big!" called Willy Sweetser.

"Ye divil, ye!" from Pete Maloney.

"You did pretty well," from Uncle Theodore, whose smile spoke more praise than his words.

"Took more'n a heathen job or a wood-pile to floor you!" from Hiram Hobber, who had come to the city especially for the occasion.

The Big Fellow had one arm around Uncle Theodore and the other all but around the lean Hiram and the lean Pete, when he noticed on the edge of the circle a little lady who claimed his attention instantly.

“ You were always so big and simple, I don’t see how you ever got away from them savages alive! ” said Mrs. Billings, using her handkerchief freely.

“ He’s not so damned simple! No, not so very damned simple! ” added Colonel Walker. For the Colonel also was present and as chipper as ever.

And what was this of which all were talking?

“ We’re going to make you a real Governor of a real State of these United States, with no Excellency business in it! ” declared Willy.

“ Yes, and I know one Congressional district that’s going to send a solid delegation, ” said Hiram. “ If you’ll only hustle for it a little, it’s yours, easy! ”

“ He’s always been too busy doing his best on the job he had, ” added Uncle Theodore, “ to be looking for another till he was asked to take it. ”

“ You don’t need to hustle, ” asserted Willy. “ It’s all right! ” We fear that Willy was becoming a boss, though he denied the allegation as earnestly as any boss ever had.

“ And I’m not pulling back, ” said Colonel Walker, who always knew the winning band wagon, and immediately he was mounted, acted as

if he were driver and owner. In fact, he insisted that he was the original Harden man.

From his heart the Big Fellow thanked them. But he would not decide yet. He was going to take the first train to Bolton.

“ If I go in I’ll fight to win ! ” he announced, finally. “ But I make no promises. I’ll lay no plans till I have been home. There is someone I wish to consult ”—and the someone in question was not Madame Mother.

XLV.

BACK TO BOLTON

OF a strictly polite and circumspect nature was that meeting between Epaminanidad and Benito at the Bolton station. Benito resolutely refused to give up the dress-suit case, which was well, as Pam was seized with such a fit of snickering that he must have dropped it when they approached the gate.

“Same old trick! Same old trick! Tee-hee! Tee-hee!” he cried, for he could hold in no longer after Big started up the path.

This time the cherry-tree was not in fruit, but in bloom, and a shower of blossoms descended on the head and shoulders of our Governor of Bar. Through the flowers he saw an oval face with long lashes shading the eyes that challenged any storming party to do its worst.

“Two Braids! I’m coming up!” he called, dropping the over-burdened overcoat from his arm, while out of the pockets fell a magazine and a book.

“Who’s afraid?” she answered. “You couldn’t possibly climb it!”

“Can’t I? You watch me!”

He flattered himself he made the ascent with

some agility; and there he was, standing on a limb on one side of the trunk and she on a limb on the other side.

“How now?” he asked.

“Yes, how now? You seem to have climbed up, Excellency,” she observed, “just as I was about to climb down!” Laughing, she sprang to the ground, leaving him with nothing to do but follow her.

“Do you notice anything different about the house?” she asked, a little hurt that he had not seen it already, although she had not given him a fair chance to look.

“Yes, I do. I see a conservatory filled with flowers,” he returned, with a glance of appreciation which cured the hurt instantly and made her wildly happy that she had never offered to pay him that debt, “which will gladden the hearts of those we love in the long winter months. I know who did it. I know where some of the salary of the Charming Lady of Exhibit A has gone.”

The two old ladies were on the porch, of course, waiting with due dignity and pride, which could not keep the tears out of their eyes.

“Madame Mother! Aunt Julia!” he cried. “I can see you are well! I know you are happy, for here are your children home! home! home!”

He threw his hat in the air and the old steps creaked under his spring.

“Jimmy! My son! my son! Jimmy, you are disarranging my hair! My! Is this the custom in Bar?” quoth Madame Mother. “Julia, see

that he treats you respectfully and touches your forehead with his lips, as a great man of state should do when he returns after his success abroad."

"Oh! If that is it!" He planted a kiss on Madame Mother's forehead and then took her thin, almost transparent hands in his and touched his lips to them.

"Oh, you did it gently, I will say that—you weren't rough—only it was so impetuous," admitted Madame Mother, who was not really displeased.

"Now, Aunt Julia, strictly according to rule," said Big, turning to her. "Fold your arms—no, put them at your side, soldier fashion, and stand perfectly still, lest I might press your forehead too hard."

"I won't do anything of the kind, you great, ridiculous boy!" she protested. "You may kiss me on the mouth. There! That is proper. And now, though I'm only your aunt, you will kiss my hands!" which he did, as became the great man of state.

"I think we ought to measure him! I believe Mister Ninety in Calculus has been growing," said Ellen.

"I haven't!" he answered, earnestly. Why was she always touching him on his sorest point?

"Let's see!"

She cleared away the vines from the old mark. An obedient vassal, he complied with orders from

on high and the line of that sturdy back was still as straight as the post.

“No! He’s not!” Ellen admitted. “And if he’s not, why, what does that prove? I appeal to the court, what does that prove? If he’s not grown in Bar, where everything grows so fast, why——”

“He’s stopped growing, positively!” declared Big.

“But we treat the potentate illy,” she went on, snatching down some of the honeysuckle vine ruthlessly. “Here’s one for your buttonhole, O Excellency, and one for the second buttonhole and the third, and one sticking out of the back of your collar adds an Oriental effect. And he should be crowned. We’ll crown him, Aunt Julia.”

She twisted a lock of hair till it stood erect on the top of his head and to this she tied still another honeysuckle branch, while he submitted to the nonsense happily.

“You are perfectly foolish!” said Aunt Julia.

“Perfectly!” said Madame Mother, beaming.

“Wait!” cried Ellen. “Pam must see him!”

She called that partisan of the Spartans, who came with his stately shuffle and on the lookout. She wasn’t to get any joke on him, no, indeedy!

“Behold the potentate—and what a fine word behold is for a potentate!—behold the high and mighty potentate of Bar, Epaminanidad! See him in floral grandeur! See his topknot! Is it not fierce? With that very topknot he

charmed an whole populace into peace and plenty."

"Jes' de same girl. Cain' change her with any foreign voyages," Pam concluded. "If dat's all de fun yose to make I'll be movin' on;" and he turned to go.

But there was more coming. Big had been thinking how to get even. Without removing the topknot, he bent over a pile of freshly mown lawn-rakings by the steps.

"Oh, the odor of this is good!" he said, seriously. "There's nothing so fresh and sweet in Bar."

"No, that's true, Big," she returned, stepping toward him, and over her head descended a cloud of green, while she spluttered.

"Miss Ellen," said Pam, as she was picking the ticklish green spears out of her hair and ears, "did yo' evah heah dat air ol' saw 'bout dem dat laughs las'? Tee-hee!" and he went as fast as his legs would take him around the corner of the house.

"You're perfectly foolish!" said Aunt Julia.

"Perfectly!" agreed Madame Mother.

Who wouldn't be after two years in the tropics, on a sunny afternoon in May on the home porch?

"Ellen, I think it is time for tea," Aunt Julia added.

While she went to fetch it, Big settled down on the steps, as he had when he returned from Washington, while Mother Mother, who was in the

same armchair she occupied then, became businesslike at once.

"Jimmy, Mr. Sweetser has been very busy in your behalf, and Mr. Hobber has, too."

"How happy I have been in my friends!" he rejoined. "They do everything for me."

"Well, they say you have only to say the word to be nominated for Governor. The party is looking for a man without a string to him in order to win. Now——"

"I'm going to think that over and talk it over with Ellen and with you, in due time," he said, patting her hand affectionately.

Ellen appearing in the doorway overheard him. She became very quiet. Little was said as, happily, they went through that regular afternoon function, and the silence enabled them to overhear a conversation between the East and the West (via Africa) at the corner of the house, which seems worth repeating.

"I 'spect 'fo' he came 'way dey was all wearin' close," said Pam.

"The people in the backwoods not yet," answered Benito. "They wear the clothes when they go to the market and to the church."

"Jes' keep one cotton shirt fo' Sunday best, eh? Close is de great civilizer. Some kind er close is necessary to staht with—jes' a pillow-case with holes in it fo' de arms if it's hot. An' de mo' civilization dey is de mo' kinds o' close some fo'ks has, an' de mo' patches some fo'ks

has—but dey has to has de close er dey ain't civilized nohow. Yis, indeedy."

The silent Benito only looked at his patent-leather shoes in rapture.

"I 'spect dat aftah yo' Oryental grandeur an' him bein' an Excellency dis yeah house don' seem much to yo'?"

"It is the home of His Bigness," returned Benito. That was enough for him. A personality, not a principle, had impressed itself on his Oriental mind. Nor would he consider "Father of the Tongals" or any other name in place of that which he had given his patron.

"Lemme tell yo', an' Ise an' ol' man an' has had 'sperience," Pam continued, "dat all de big men in dis country comes from de li'l houses jes' like dis yeah. Yis, indeedy. An' dey has mothers dat, when dey wants to do dis an' dat, says yo' cain't, kase it ain' good fo' yo' karacter. An' aftah de closes an' aftah Miss Ellen an' de abc's how did Mistah Big win out in dis yeah job?"

"With these;" and Benito pointed to his forehead, his eyes, and his heart. "He go to the people when they get the wrong idea and he talk to them till they get the right idea, and he never change—never!"

"Dat air jes' like him. He was allus makin' up de quarrels 'tween de boys when he was a li'l fellow an' all de boys used to be roun' our gate. But 'twan' so easy as all dat out in dat lan'. Didn' he evah have to use de spankin' machine?"

"I do not know what that English means."

Pam explained arduously.

"He can fight, yes, he can fight like the thirty cents" (this slang of the day Benito had heard on the train) "and then it is better for to take the steamer to Spain."

"Yes, same ol' Mistah Big. I 'membah how he had two er free breshes when he was a li'l-shaver—an' dey wan' no 'count breshes neither when he got to gwine. Yo' 'spec' to stay with him all de time?"

"All my life!" which is not such a long time in that old East lately discovered by the young West.

"Yo' seem purty confident o' yo'se'f," Pam returned. "How yo' know yo' is?"

"The kindness of the great heart of His Bigness would not let him send me away," Benito answered.

"Yo' shuah is a bright boy an' ain' lettin' yo' slices drop buttah side down," Pam concluded.

The two old ladies smiled, while Big, blushing a little over being the subject of such candid analysis, looked away at the hills and thought of Ellen. Both were calling him. Tea over, he turned to her.

"Shall it be a tramp?" he asked.

"As far as you like," she answered.

"Your hair is too high," he remarked, as she took down her hat from the rack.

"Not for walking," she answered, softly.

Now the winning impulse was strong in him as they started toward the big tree when there was not the slightest sign of a storm. Of all his sea-

sions of talk-it-over-together, this was the greatest of his life; and the speaking part was his, the listening part hers. She heard such eloquence as no one else was ever to hear from him in all his career.

Is it our affair what he said? Let it suffice that, as the two old ladies saw them returning, Aunt Julia declared that he was none too good for Ellen, to which Madame Mother responded that she only hoped he was good enough. They knew what had happened from the subjective elation of the pair as they entered; for in an open country you can see that roads are coming to a head before you reach their meeting-place.

"It's all right, Jimmy?" asked Madame Mother, after Ellen had gone upstairs.

"It's——" but, the dictionary carried nothing in its stock equal to the occasion. He would not try for a word, and Madame Mother saw that none was needed.

"You look it, well enough, Jimmy," she remarked, knowingly.

"Perfectly foolish!" said Aunt Julia, half hysterically.

When Ellen reappeared she wore her hair in two braids, "just this once, in honor of Mister Ninety in Calculus," as she told him, with a touch of shyness.

"Oh, Ellen, it doesn't seem as if I deserve all this happiness. I——" and there he was, man of the law, still unable to express himself. But he found speech at the table, in buoyancy and in boy-

ishness, while Benito, slipping in at the door, helped Pam to wear out the silver by overpolishing it.

“Exhibit A was a wonderful school, wasn’t it?” he said, looking into Ellen’s eyes, as, in truth, he was most of the time. “Oh, we who have been in Bar have something we would not lose, would we?”

It was a quiet evening, brimming with the happiness of promise fulfilled for all, without as yet any direct mention of this great thing come true, as Madame Mother and Aunt Julia sat on the porch watching the twilight pass and the fireflies come and Big and Ellen walked up and down the path making their plans. Again, is it our affair what they said? A new and permanent partnership they had formed. Together, through life, they would look out along the straight line’s way, which may be hard traveling at first, but is the pleasanter the farther you go.

THE END



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